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The Mysterious Mr. Jarvis.

By

Frederick R. Giles.

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THE MYSTERIOUS MR. JARVIS

BY

FREDERICK R. GILES

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Series

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PREFATORY.

THERE is little to be said by way of explanation, apology or boast, in opening a relation so absolutely of fact.

It is, however, essential to warn all those who deny photography a place in art, that they can stoop or rise, as it may be, to little sympathy with this record, which is nothing if not true. Yet, while aspiring to be "true to life," these chapters emphatically disclaim classification within a realism that regards *carnality* the sum of human error. This chronicle thus, is neither of fancy nor of salacious truth.

The matter of strong drink, which in large part affects what may be called the moral of the tale, is one of the most notorious questions of present discussion and must teach its own lesson unaided, here or elsewhere, throughout the text.

* * *

Such is the arbitrary choice of fate, that human events are made to turn upon trifles. There is a familiar word about the rain of the previous night and the shake of a cattle boy's head, either or both of which decided Waterloo.

Glancing forward through this history it seems that its shaping fact is a dead sparrow. A boy passing through Rupert Square during the noon hour of May —, 188–, threw a stone and killed a sparrow in the street. That little tragedy brought together the elements of a notable chapter in the criminal history of Chicago.

THE MYSTERIOUS MR. JARVIS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCING A GENTLEMAN.

The plan of Rupert Square was a whim—but the history is unimportant. It conforms in no degree to the lines and angles of adjacent streets and is without known counterpart in American cities. Yet it is the gemmed heart of one of Chicago's best residence quarters.

At a point upon the right decending side of one of the great macadam avenues of the "South Side," the line of mansions halt, and there is a wide carriage-gate, beneath which a driveway diverts. Through this gate there is a view of shrubbery and building confused at first to the eye that anticipates familiar geometric forms. The diverting way followed, as it may be, down its broad pebbled center, or skirted upon a smooth, white flag, describes an accurate semicircle, that debouches into the avenue a hundred yards below. The entrance and exit, terms which may be applied interchangeably to either end of the lane, are surmounted

by corresponding *portes cocherer*, one of which has been noticed. The square thus presents the form of the segment of a circle. Upon its outer arc—described by the path—stand the dwellings which, with exactly similar stone swell-fronts of three stories, exhibit an unbroken, semi-circular facade. The focal point from each doorway is the charming park which fills the segment chorded by the broad avenue.

The drive, which offers strictly "no thoroughfare," is ever neat ; its grassy margin is as clearly defined as the line between the river's waters and the shore, and no vandal vehicle disturbs its pebbled surface, "under penalty" as legends posted at the gates declare. The traces of the morning and evening incursions of provisioners are quickly effaced, and the guardian gardener pursues with rake and broom even the occasional carriages that roll to the doors of the "square's" inhabitants.

The park itself is a fine conceit in landscape gardening. There is an abundance of the most select specimens of greenery and flowers ; there is a fountain and some pretty pieces of statuary ; there is a lakelet fringed with flags, dotted with lily-pads and stocked with fish ; there is a rustic bridge, rustic arbor and rustic settees, and there are winding paths attaining all these charms.

At recurring intervals in the procession of months the snow and ice obscure these beauties to be sure, but the pleasant memory is treasured in the still hospitable surroundings until springtime calls them back again.

By culture's caste-gauge the fifty families of the square are

of the peerage. Each stoop ascends and each door admits to conditions of good breeding and, it is well to say, an incident of riches. The standard of intelligence is equal to the best contemporaneous literature and a considerable proficiency in music and art. The monthly magazines, the new novels, the little philosophies of the day and all the petty furores of the aesthetic world are taken with a good digestion. Such is the creditable degree of the square's refinement, while there is everywhere through the land a jealous disclaimer of Chicago's culture. There are many handsome ladies, some real gentlemen, and a large complement of very pretty children. It is to the best credit of an aspiring folk that their offspring are born fair—for how much is a parent soul defined in the features of the young! There is a wide license of style and infinite beauty of taste in the dress of the children, and the boys and girls of Rupert Square complete the guarantee of culture.

The community of spirit, the fraternity of feeling among the residents of the square is pefect. Each is the other's welcome friend, and neighborly receptions are *sans ceremonie* throughout the year. A chastity-precluding gossip marks all intercourse, and good breeding sits too guardedly upon deportment that the neighborhood should ever be set agog. Yet, on an April morning of the year 188—, a general anxiety was felt as to the possible standing of the purchaser and new occupant of number 50, the house at the extreme southern end of the square. The premises had been vacant for several weeks and it was known that negotiations for a sale had been pending. Now it appeared that some one had

moved in unperceived. Entry must have been made under cover of night. No goods had been seen to go in, no one had witnessed the new arrival ; and yet a tidily dressed woman, of the general appearance of a professional housekeeper, stepped from the door of No. 50, in response to the milkman's summons, that morning. She ordered her half-gallon can filled with milk, presented a small porcelain pitcher for cream, paid the pennies, and then bought a dollar's worth of blue and yellow tickets each. The new neighbor thus was unquestionably a fixture.

Immediately upon her return from her errand to the curb, and while the milkman continued his "circuit of the 'square,'" the strange woman, who gave the first evidence of new life in No. 50, repaired to the kitchen.

"I haven't cooked in twenty years," she remarked, "and the master will have to make the allowance."

"The furniture only makes matters worse. How I hate a new stove!" as she observed the smoldering condition of the fire and the jets of smoke which crept through the interstices of the range, "and especially these odd arrangements. Ah, I guess I have it at last," she concluded more graciously as, in pulling out a throttle-like knob, hidden half under the range, the smoke vanished and a cheerful roar from the iron casemate indicated that the fire had caught a draught.

"I wonder, though, why they wanted to hide the damper in that fashion, and I'm sure that the oven won't bake on the bottom," she went on, with returning bad temper, as she glanced under the lid of a faintly-simmering pot of

cracked wheat porridge, and hurried thence to the paring of some selected potatoes.

"Dear me, it's terrible queer the capers cut by the head of this house of late, but sure this is the worst of all. The idea of leaving the old home in Philadelphia and moving out west into a stuffy old barracks like this! Heigh-ho! If Mrs. Jarvis was living to-day it would be awful the feelings she'd have, and anyway I think the old man should respect my wishes and the wishes of poor old Thomas. We've been with him in joy and sorrow these fifteen years and shed our tears on the grave of his dead just the same as in the family. But it ain't to be, worse fortune. Instead of that he comes to me a week ago and says: 'Eliza, discharge the servants, giving them a month's pay for the lack of warning, and put everything in readiness to abandon the house and the city.' I could scarely ask the words, 'Am I to go too?' when he says, so freezingly, 'You and Thomas will go with me,' and just to think of it, not a stick or a thread of the treasures that make the old place so dear could I take with me—nothing but his clothes and linen and my own poor belongings. And to come to this place—Chicago—which I have never half heard of before, and to sneak in like thieves in the middle of the night, and to find everything furnished brand, splinter new. Why, I can't help but feel that I am in somebody else's house, where I oughtn't to be. I can't go into any room or open a closet door without fearing that somebody is going to step out and ask me what I'm doing here. And, if the trampish-looking fellows that Mr Jarvis has had secret dealings with back home for some time past

are to follow us out here, I promise no happy results of this crazy trip."

Eliza Kerwin, for such was the gloomy soliloquist, is briefly described as a matronly object, of kindly features, portly form, and certain age, as the French say, who in the course of years had risen from the perfunctory post of chamber-maid to the responsible commission of *majora domo*. Her sole characteristics are eminent aptitude for her duties and single devotion to the house of Jarvis. She had indeed been in the household eighteen years and witnessed the successive defeats of the Jarvis' hopes of progeny in the loss of four children, and when the last bereavement came in the death of Mrs. Jarvis, two years before the opening of this narrative, old Eliza's tears had flowed as copiously indeed as did those of the stricken widower, and her sorrow had been quite as poignant and sincere. At the death of Mrs. Jarvis there remained none properly belonging to the domestic realm of Jarvis save the head of the house himself, old Eliza and Thomas Rawson. The inalienable rights of this last named were also founded upon a long and honorable term of service, and he will be introduced in his turn at once, for as Eliza finished her lugubrious cogitations he stepped upon the scene from the rear, through the kitchen door.

"Well, Lizzie," he sang out cheerily, addressing the housekeeper by that friendly corruption of her Christian name which none other presumed to use, "I have brought you the chops. What do you think of our new location under daylight?"

"It won't pass muster with the old home, that's sure, and

I hope devoutly that it will not be long we stay here," replied Eliza with a flourish of emphasis.

"Tut, tut," he rejoined; "why, you haven't looked around you yet. Have you seen the fine park we've got for a front yard, and the handsome row of houses for neighbors, and the big lake like the ocean you can see from the front windows upstairs? I've been around making observations this last hour, and I think already that it is a toss-up for the difference between Chicago and Philadelphia. We might have done a good deal worse, Lizzie, a good deal worse."

"I might have known you'd say so," retorted the good woman, with some asperity. "You're always approving what the old man does. Why, I dare say that you would declare it all beautiful if he should move with us to the Fijii islands. I needn't look to you for any consolation, and I tell you that I believe that you are in with Jarvis in schemes which ain't any particular credit to you both. Not that I think any wrong, but I fear for your wits."

Old Thomas did not deign a reply to this direct attack, and answered only with a little deprecating laugh. The fleeting light in his eye and the nervous quaver in his laugh might, however, have arrested the attention of one more observing than Eliza. She neither saw nor seemed to hear, but having finished the last potato she gave them all to the fire in their proper receptacle, and proceeded to the preparation of the breakfast biscuits, which she meant to be her *chefs d'oeuvre.*

Still, her suspicions were not unfounded, for Thomas was certainly admitted to confidences denied to her, and he

frequently went off on the queerest and most irregular excursions at "the old man's" bidding.

The oven happily did not justify Eliza's early innuendo, and within a few minutes the biscuits were assuming a uniform, tawny hue, as they "rose" under the heat. Noting this and the cracked wheat's finished consistency, and observing the frittering progress of the potato chips, she set the broiling iron for the chops and said to Thomas: "Go and call Mr. Jarvis to breakfast."

Thomas, in obedience to Eliza's command, ascended the stairs and rapped upon the door of the room at the second floor front. An audible disturbance of bed clothing and a sharp "What's wanted?" from within gave evidence that the reveille was heeded.

"Breakfast is ready," suggested Thomas as a veteran in service should.

There came an answer of heed and assent in grave but pleasant tone.

Henry T. Jarvis was a man in his fifties the morning of April—, 188—, when he arose at Thomas' call. He was born in Philadelphia, of a good colonial stock of tradespeople. His father was rich, and as an only child his education and entry into practical affairs had been easy enough. Although he had been afforded a college course his tastes had led him to no intellectual specialty, and after graduation, somewhere decently near the middle of his class, he had been given a junior partnership in his devoted father's substantial importing house. Jarvis & Son, like another "and son," which no doubt promptly suggests itself, was lettered

on one of the large fronts on a wholesale street for a dozen years. At the end of this time the demise of the senior Jarvis dissolved the partnership, and the style of the house on the sign and cards, and on the note and bill heads was instantly changed to "Henry T. Jarvis." At the time of his father's death Jarvis was verging on forty and was the sole legatee. His mother had preceded his father to the grave so many years before, that only the faintest memory of her had been vouchsafed the son. The year before his father's death Jarvis discreetly met a little duty that might have been better performed some years earlier. He married. This union had been eminently proper. He was unquestionably of sufficient age, his father's consent had been given, and his selection had been made in his own social rank. The new Mrs. Jarvis was a gentle person of good breeding and fair charms, ten years her husband's junior. Her amiable nature endeared her to all and she made a devoted and faithful wife during sixteen sad years. One notable event of the marriage, from our standpoint, is that it brought Eliza and Thomas into the household as servants.

Even before his father's death Henry Jarvis had undertaken those speculative enterprises which largely characterized his business affairs for some years afterward. The importing trade was never abandoned, but with the growing volatility of the American tradesman he addressed his energies to numerous undertakings "on the outside," which had proven uniformly successful. He dealt in wheat, prospected in provisions, dabbled in oil, gambled in stocks,

and, with a view to a stable investment, seized an open interest in a wholesale whiskey house. This last venture plunged him into complicity with certain public frauds, and after narrowly escaping indictment he withdrew from the arena of speculation considerably replenished in purse, but rather undermined in reputation, and, the world judged, shattered in spirit. A distressing circumstance in his domestic life occurring about that time may have aided to induce this judgment. His little son was kidnapped. Three of the four children which Heaven granted to his marital union during the first six years had died untowardly. The youngest of these, a boy—the loved and loving pledge of Jarvis' perpetuity—survived, until, at the age of 4, one day just nine years before the opening of this record, he was stolen from the streets near his home. The very earth was moved to recover him and for six months the press rang with the crime until it suddenly ended by the discovery of undeniable proofs of the child's death through some misdirection of the villains' plans. Mrs. Jarvis never recovered from the heart-thrust of this affliction, and when seven years later she died, her last sigh, breathed to her grief-stricken husband, was for her lost Charlie.

Jarvis placed a strong curb upon his grief. His friends thought that in the anguish of his multiplied misfortunes, he might well have prayed for death, for upon whose altar did desolation ever sit more heavily? With five such angel faces smiling sweet invitations to a reunion beyond the tomb, with naught in life save the appalling spectacle of their places made vacant, the justification of men, if not of God, seems extended to self-destruction.

He wept throughout the performance of the sacred rites, but at their conclusion wiped his eyes, resumed his business and continued to live without the slightest alteration of manner or habits. In his large and elegant home he made no change. Under Eliza' s superintendency the household regimé was sustained as before. Jarvis occupied his accustomed chamber, partook of his solitary meals at his ample board, and went about daily affairs with a regularity of practice which seemed to exclude from his mind all consciousness of the ghostly loneliness that pervaded the house and weighed even upon the servants

More than a year passed under an exclusive demeanor that denied him personal friends, when he suddenly began digressions of an unparalleled character. Without unbending his stiff exterior, he took to indulgence in nightly absences from home, and received, from time to time, both at his office and residence, the most disreputable looking men, to whom he granted apparently cordial greetings and long private audiences. One night a police raid discovered him in one of the low resorts of crime in a wretched quarter of the city. The officers, upon recognizing him, accepted some vague excuse and released him, but as he paid fines for the most notorious of the lot, and was afterwards seen at midnight in their company, the suspicions of the police were strongly directed against him. A quiet but thorough investigation was about to be instituted against this libertine of the whiskey ring, when he suddenly settled his business in trust upon a friend and removed to Chicago.

Such was the new occupant of 50 Rupert Square.

CHAPTER II.

UNTO BETTER ACQUAINTANCE.

"DETECTIVE DEPARTMENT." Thus, in the lower corridor of the City Hall, reads the sign upon the door which admits us, not long after Mr Jarvis had dispatched the breakfast prepared in our presence.

The civilian who presumes to enter this door does so but to encounter another through which a little wicket admits his voice with its burden of information, demand, or entreaty. He has usually lost a child or a dog, and wants the entire machinery of peace-maintenance stopped forthwith to recover the errant darling. It is needless to say the machine does not stop and that the wicket flies shut upon half-completed instructions to go to the Central Police Office, two rooms beyond, to the right. But we will not consult the factotum of the wicket, nor pause before material obstructions in invading the very holy of holies of the mysterious realm beyond the door. With all due deference to the genius of the men who compose this important department of the public service it must be confessed that their headquarters do not in anyway contribute to the mystery with which the outer world surrounds them. The three large apartments we enter are flooded with light. No grim and

suggestive insignia of the secret service are in view, no souvenirs of great crimes adorn the bright oak panels of the walls. Not even a handcuff or a dark-lantern is left at large to confirm the nature of the enterprises afoot within. There are desks, tables, and chairs, all of white oak. The boarded floor is clean, and everything has a fresh, new look. Here and there a chart or a map is hung, and there is one bookcase. It is a hard matter to guess what books a detective would fancy or require beyond romances of his craft, but here the positiveness of choice is put beyond question— the two hundred volumes in the case are city directories of the most recent date obtainable, from every community of importance in the Union. A diligent search through the desks and about corners might bring forth copies of the criminal code and the revised statutes, but the possession of even these clever texts is not vaunted, and the directories stand alone for the literary tastes of the occupants. The only item of the fittings and furniture to excite the wondering interest of the uninitiate is a wired and wicketed inclosure in the chamber farthest from the entrance. Behind this barrier sits a man whose energies are actively engaged in heeding the summons of a restless telephone, his voice and pen maintaining the while a steady accompaniment to the almost incessant whirr of a muffled annunciator.

This is the exchange office of the telephone system which brings the thirty police stations of the city into immediate correspondence one with the other, and connects them with the central head, completing thus the equipment of an almost perfect constabulary. Events not yet old in memory

demonstrate the military efficiency of this perpetually mobilized *guard civile.* Through the co-operative media of electric communication and rapid transit, as afforded in the telephone and patrol service, the exigencies of riot can be promptly met in Chicago with a regiment of nearly 2,000 men, drilled by exeperience to the most summary assertion of the majesty of the law.

But battles in the Black road, massacres in the Haymarket, and riots on the viaduct are not now entertaining the man at the desk. His attention is given successively to a burglary on the West side, a stabbing affray on Goose island, a floating corpse in the river, a fatal accident at the Clybourn place railway crossing, and thus and so he runs the minor, though no less sickening, gamut of the city's hourly crimes and casualties. Oh, the tidings of human suffering and grief and shame which his pen records as his ear hearkens! Yet he has in the midst of it all the occasion to smile, and oftentimes the sensitive diaphram of his intrument, still tremulous with some shocking tragedy, is set vibrating with his jest.

"At 11:30— Twentieth Street crossing, Illinois Central— girl, aged 13, beggar — cut in two, instantly killed— well, I should hope so—Morgue, Twenty-second Street wagon— Lucy—What's that? Oh, for heaven's sake, spell that name—H-e-i-d-e-l-m-e-y-e-r—Great Scott! what a name— pity they didn't spare the girl and cut the name in two— parents being looked up—bye, bye."

W-h-i-r-r! He breaks the connection, files his report and hails the next summon in friendly fashion.

It is evening, and as the hour approaches six the vast

building above and about begins to respond with the exodus of the hundreds of employes in the municipal offices which honeycomb the inner structure. Then down the long, tiled corridor is heard the regular tread of the central detail — Chicago's "Broadway squad," her pride of gendarmerie, picked on a scale of physical manliness for genteel duty, on the down-town street crossings—repairing now for roll-call to the muster-room adjoining. A moment later the wicketed door opens, admitting a wave of the noise without, and a man who strides rapidly into the smallest of the three rooms. This man is McMasters, brevet lieutenant and superintendent of the police secret service. He is tall, well formed and erect, and his face, angular and beardless save for a light mustache, bears the unmistakable brand of his Irish extraction. He was originally a patrolman, but his activities, alertness, and perchance his discretion among those who control public affairs, recommended him to advancement. Personally, he is "a clever party" when well met. He was once the best runner, boxer, and wrestler, the smoothest voice at song, and the neatest foot at a jig-step on the force. But the prime of life finds him too sedate for these pastimes. Officially, he is approachable and of fair good temper; on familiar footing of respect with his supalterns. John McMasters by name, his men, as they now rapidly follow him alone and in couplets, hail him familiarly as "John" or "Jack." Seven o'clock has struck, and detectives are strewn over the tables, desks and chairs, chatting animatedly with each other. The all-wise board of alderman

has appropriated for thirty men for this service, but the number is not sufficient. The deficiency is supplied with policeman selected from the ranks and sent forth in citizens clothes. These are known abroad as "fly cops," a palpable derivative from the French *mouchard*, compounded with a vulgarism of the street, for "cop" is one of the many flash names of the policeman. Thus quite fifty men are present.

McMasters himself was the witty lieutenant who, on a day of riot, finding himself at the head of a company, rallied from different precincts, met the observation: "They are mixed" with the retort, "Of course — they are all Micks."

McMasters could have similarly characterized his detective force, for after the Irish and Irish-Americans were counted out there was room for but a very few of other lineage. They were all men of good physique and of talents doubtless equal to what they were paid for, beyond which comment need not go.

Such are Chicago's pathfinders of crime; not a single Vidocq among them, for no "wiry little fellow with a lynx eye" could tip the beam and scratch the height requisite for a policeman. Moreover, they do not call themselves detectives. With their multifarious duties, from chasing juvenile thieves to apprehending the authors of mysterious, high crimes, they are "police officers in plain clothes." The word "detective" (outside the newspapers, where they genuinely love to see it coupled with their names) is an epithet, and they chaff each other with it.

McMasters is occupied for a quarter of an hour in the inspection of the mail and such reports as the officers have returned from their day's work. A packet of letters addressed to the chief, and forwarded by him to this department, contitutes the greater portion of the mails. Some are missives of importance, tending to practical results, but a large percentage is of the screeds of complainants, and the fancies of morbid folk. The letters are rapidly assorted, the selections for preservation and the outcasts unto immediate destruction, each aggregating to its class a respectable pile. The reports are swiftly scanned, and pencil and mental notes are made for the future guidance of the enterprises variously detailed. This done, McMasters steps into a doorway communicating with the larger apartment where the men are congregated. With the roll book in his hand he reads the roster, to which each, as his name is reached, returns the conventional "present!" or "here, sir!" in revelation of his presence. The names are called in couplets as the men work in pairs. Every officer has his "partner" and is seldom separated from him by a different commission. This condition of affairs is rather inimical to opportunities for the solitary exploits of which detective tales relate, but it is found to be quite essential to the success of the great art of thief-catching.

"Kinnane and Moore."

Of the two men, who answered in concert to these names, the first sat against a remote window reading an evening newspaper by the gradually failing light. From the moment he entered he had taken no part in the rough gossip and tainted persiflage which engaged the others. Physically he

was commonplace almost to insignificance. A hair under the regulation height, his broad shoulders and deep chest, together with a short, thick neck and slight stoop in carriage gave him a squat figure. His square head had but few gray-brown locks floating about its crown, and his thick, sandy-white mustache was cropped like a brush across the lips. Small, gray eyes and hard, smooth-shaven jaws completed Jimmy Kinnade's physique. He wore a dingy brown suit of tweed and a slouch hat. That he was an Irishman was in no way disguised. His face stood as an open revelation from Erin, and the Milesian clung to his few words with unconquerable distinctness. Totally uneducated, he had advanced solely through stern devotion to duty during years in the police service. He was of a peculiarly earnest reserve, almost churlish, a trait that in his sphere doubtless helped him, as does dignity in higher callings, to sustain the reputation his genuine efficiency earned. His execution of the law was always vigorous, at times exceeding requirements. He had beyond doubt a good deal of the ruffian under repression within him.

The same features of character which made him the bitter opponent of malfeasance and the fierce and inveterate enemy of the law-breaker would probably have made him a votary to lawlessness and a first-rate rough, had he not early in life taken up the cause of public peace and good order as a means of livelihood. A resident of Chicago from his youth, his acquaintance commanded a limitless range. He knew every bad character by name, face, haunts and habits. Gifted with a native perspicacity, which outweighs all edu-

cation, adroit, relentless and brave, he was by many accorded the guerdon of first place in that arena of sharp competition and partisan prejudice, the police force. Yet inspect him closely, call out his brief vocabulary in the utterance of any thought, and even in the face of his best achievements he proved a very common sort of man.

His partner, Ed Moore, was a stout, courageous, bright-witted young man, giving every promise of future distinction in his profession, and altogether a satisfactory coadjutor to the elder man.

The two had been engaged upon a routine matter which would occupy them a few days longer without developments or further instructions, and a brief colloquy with their superior ended the business. Those who had completed their work of the day, and the others who entered upon their duties of the night, were rapidly filing out when the roll was finished, and Kinnane, of the first class, was joining the general exit when McMasters detained him.

"Come back a moment, Jim. I've forgotten a little matter which, although of no great consequence, is worth a slight looking up Take this letter and carry it around for ten days. If you can't do anything with it by that time bring it back. It doesn't amount to much anyway, for if the party is bad we'll have him for 'the overt act' soon enough."

The lieutenant laughed lightly as he spoke and handed a letter from the day's mail to Kinnane, who at once unfolded and read it:

"Philadalphia, Pa., April —, Chief of Police, Chicago: Henry T. Jarvis, suspicious character, left this city a week ago and is thought to be located in Chicago. He is wanted for no known crime, but is suspected of being the head of burglar operations executed by others and will bear watching. He is five feet eleven inches in height, about fifty years of age, dark complexion, with short, gray hair and small side whiskers of the same color. He wears no other beard, but is a fine looking man of the sporting-parson style. He always dresses well but not flashy. He was at one time a respectable business man here and still pretends to do the legitimate in commissions. He is believed to be rich, but has his means so placed that his financial status cannot be learned. He has no aliases, but is known among the crooks with whom he associates here as 'The Mysterious.' I make these details particularly clear because he has aroused my interest and if he stops in Chicago I want to hear from him. Besides it will be to your advantage to get 'acquainted' with him, and I promise that you will win a great prize if you can capture the gentleman, *in flagrante, etc.*, a thing at which he has baffled us after an active career of almost a year.

Very truly,

"Chief Philadelphia Police."

"Well, what do you think of the Mysterious Mr. Jarvis?" laughed McMasters, as Kinnane finished the letter. "The Phillies are evidently anxious about him. But he won't play with us long if he begins his 'operations' hereabouts, eh Jim? At all events if you see him pinch him and bring him in so we can see who he is and give him warning."

CHAPTER III.

THE TRAGIC CIRCUMSTANCE.

A month had added its thirty days to the accumulative calendar of the past. Four weeks of rain and sleet and fitful snow and influenza had brought the Winter to an end and it was now Summer, so to remain until October's first frosty touch again set Winter's seal; for as the equatorial day is shorn of twilight, so is the Chicago year peculiarly exempt from those neutral seasons the world terms spring and autumn. Winter clings to the city with a pertinacity which seemingly serves only to accelerate its flight, when it at last relaxes and summer offers its fervid favors with a constancy broken only by its rude and abrupt withdrawal. This meteorological freak is not to be observed elsewhere and it would appear that Chicago's unique location at the foot of a great inland sea puts it in isothermal relations with no place on earth.

It was noon, and the warm sun in Rupert square accented all the beauties to be found there. The trees pulsated with brimming sap and, moved to encouraged life, eagerly put forth their leaves. The process of foliation so long delayed was now dispatched with apparent haste, and even as you

looked almost, the bursting buds leafed out entire. The sweet locusts of the little wood dropped their spiced and sugared blossoms as oblations to the genial season. The trellised honey-suckles gave their incensed sirups to the bees. The lilac bushes upheld their royal clusters, now in full glory, and touched the passing breaths of air with delicate perfume. The potted exotics, issuing from their long hibernation, brewed their rich smells among the bedded plats. The gardens of the Alcasar, the parks of oriental legend, the Elysees of modern art never exhaled a more ambrosial atmosphere. Peace reigned. The scarcely sensible stir of nature—the hum of insects and the subdued flight and voice of birds—was broken only by muffled laughter and pleasant discourse floating through open casements from the dining-rooms of the square.

It was because Mr. Jarvis, according to his custom, dined late upon a tardy breakfast, that he was not at dinner. It was because he was in a thoughtful mood that he threw himself into a cushioned chair at his open parlor window and took grateful regalement from the balm and perfume of the air. It was because Thomas enjoyed in his old bones *la dolce far niente* as never a man did more that he sat at the front basement door beneath the parlor window, drawing at an ancient, and to all others offensive, pipe. It is safe to say that neither Mr. Jarvis nor Thomas looked upon the moment as the eve of a crisis in his life. Such it was, notwithstanding, and even then they heard the fateful herald. It was a whistle ; not the call of a bird, for it carried the air of a street ballad with a reckless disregard of measure and

counterpoint a bird trained to tune, if that were possible, would despise. The music entered at the north gate and proceeded along the semi-circular pavement, and could have been traced to the puckered lips of a ragged boy who, not a whit impressed by the outrage of his intrusion, was wantonly "taking in" the square on his way southward. His hands were in his pockets, his head in the air, and he whistled amain. He had wellnigh carried his disorder to the further end without plundering the shrubbery or other vandalism, and it seemed that he was about to leave the square without mischief. At that moment a troop of sparrows dropped to the ground in front of No. 50. They were the common, dust-brown creatures of the streets and roofs. The boy saw them and checked his whistle. His eye kindled with a sudden purpose and he drew from his tattered coat-pocket a stone. He half crouched and advanced on tip-toe, drawing back his right arm. The flock fled in sudden alarm, leaving one of its number, which hopped upon the curbing, and chirped, twittered, and danced as though inviting danger. The crouching figure advanced yet a few stealthy paces and suddenly launched forward its arm. The wily bird rose to swift flight even at the inception of this movement. It had its cunning part in the play, but had misjudged the boy's skill and trajectory foresight, for the stone struck it fairly in the breast two feet above the ground. The poor stricken thing fell headlong, fluttered an instant on the graveled drive, and died.

"Hi, yi, I've got ye," cried the boy in glee as he galloped forward and lifted the little corpse in his hand.

His exultation scarce survived his shout, for at the moment a heavy hand struck him with swinging force and sent him heels over head into the street. It was Thomas, indignantly aroused to vengeance.

Here was another miscalculation. The good old servant had thought that the urchin would take the admonition in haste away to digest in penance and seclusion. The boy was of different stuff, and evinced it as he rose from the ground. There was no betrayal of pain or dismay; his face was white and his eyes flashed fire. He had another stone in his pocket and he poised on his toe and hurled it desperately at Thomas. The servant dodged and half presented his broad back. The missile struck the solid flesh over Thomas' spine and bounded thence through the open window, falling at Mr. Jarvis' feet.

The boy cast about him for another weapon and finding none, nevertheless, firmly planted his feet and sent back a challenge in words that quivered with fearless anger.

"Touch me again and I'll kill you. I'll cut you into shoe-strings and shoot you full of holes," and the boy continued with such profanity of objurgative and filth of epithet that the record of his remarks is impracticable.

Thomas was unacquainted with the reckless courage of the street Arab, but he was aroused to a pitch beyond restraint, and rushing upon the boy struck him a crushing blow in the face. The boy fell as a matter of course—fell as though he had been shot. In falling his head struck the curb-stone violently and he lay very still in the gutter.

Of all untoward happenings, a policeman passing on the

main thoroughfare had witnessed the assault and now ran forward. He picked the boy out of the gutter, struggling back to consciousness, and ordered Thomas to stand his ground under arrest. The boy opened his eyes, regained his wits, and seeing the officer, began to cry in commingled emotions of anger, pain and fear.

Mr. Jarvis, who from an indifferent interest in the proceedings, had been keenly aroused to the situation, came forth.

"If you please, officer," said he gravely, "this man is my servant, and the boy was abusing him outrageously and killing birds in the street."

"Can't help that, sir ; I didn't see the boy doing anything and if you have any complaint you can swear out a warrant. But I did see your man here hit the boy, and he's my prisoner.

It was but a short walk to the district police station, and the officer not only spared Thomas the ignominy of a drive in the patrol wagon, but strolled along before his prisoner and Mr. Jarvis as though he held no custody. At the station Mr. Jarvis deposited the cash, which was taken as a special bail bond for Thomas' appearance in the court on the morrow, and master and servant walked home together.

"This is a very annoying scrape your hot temper has gotten you into," remarked Mr. Jarvis, with asperity ; but Thomas was too dazed and dejected at the sudden and surprising turn of affairs to reply.

CHAPTER IV.

IN VULGARIA.

THERE is a quarter in Chicago called "The Levee," but why so called none can tell. Despite many plausible attempts to account for it, the origin of the name has perished from municipal archives. It was probably burned in the great fire which destroyed so much ancient history. "The Levee" is contiguous to no shipping, and although it lies between the river and the lake its limits cease far within those natural boundaries. So, with the history lost and a reason unapparent, your philological research might as well be abandoned and the title of "The Levee" admitted without further question.

It is a sorry show, this "Levee," for good and pious people, and a poor spectacle as well for the worst of us. Squarely in the heart of the town, it is traversed by two wide business thoroughfares that abruptly alter aspect as they enter its confines. Stately edifices of trade drop off at a corner, and crossing the street you are "on the Levee" without warning of it unless you know the landmarks. And was ever a topography to be fixed in mind by such shabby landmarks. A double file of ill-assorted, dirty, decrepit, and ramshackle

structures, all shops below and tenements above, guard the way. The quarter is populous, there is no doubt, for such a dense array of mercenary enterprises is sheltered nowhere else. Saloons (yes, saloons—barrel houses, gin mills, rum holes, doggeries and dead-falls of every bad character. 70 per cent. of the business is in grog and the *namelesses* that pertain to the traffic), pawnshops—fences!—and what rare and varied storages of plunder, Chinese laundries (defiled raiment, opium and outlandish gaming), theatres (unblushing obscenity, disgusting sentimentality, brutal athletics, uproar, and stench). Yet after all this is but a virtuous mask for that which is in the garrets above, the sheds behind, and the cellars below.

At the time of which our story deals there was a saloon and eating-house among these rookeries, owned and conducted by a certain Jack Larue. The place is existent at this day, and has so many familiar counterparts that these descriptive lines could be spared. It was a rather more pretentious resort than the average of its neighbors, as the floor was swept and sanded, the bar was somewhat ornate, and Jack and his help kept clean. The prices, too, for lunch and drink were a notch higher, and the patrons were the more prosperous of the traffickers in shame or crime, from which all custom was drawn thereabouts. Nor did the veteran sots congregate there as elsewhere in the neighborhood, for Jack's whiskey sold for 10 cents, and he had a famous grip on tattered raiment and a memorable dismissal for his penniless customers. The bar was of imitation rosewood and the mirror was nearly six feet square with a dizzy quan-

tity of fancy carving and tinsel garniture all over and around. On the back bar were ranged Jack's exhibition stock of glasses, French-cut bottles, containing the full line of liqueurs and cordials from absinthe and vermuth to chartreuse and curacoa (which gave great effect, but met few calls), and a big pearl-handled, blued-steel, cannon-calibred, Colt's navy revolver, which was meant for a standing menace against "nonsense"

Opposite the bar and ranged along the right wall (as one faces the interior from the street) was a row of lunch-tables. Those who have never tasted indigency and foraged in a city for cheap fare have never seen the like of those tables and their accompanying service. The square deal boards, made for the crowded accommodation of four persons were spread with a mottled oil-cloth drawn tight over the edges, and securely cleated underneath. A pewter caster, with cruets of chemically pure acetic acid, coarse pepper, feeble mustard, rock salt, and moulded catsup, formed the condiment allotment of each. Then there were the "covers" of ironstone china, the knives and forks of nickle-plated iron, the cups and saucers of imperishable Wedgewood, the murky and opalescent glasses, and that laurel of the civilized dining-board, that rarest conceit in table napery, the little red napkin with fringes. There was no menu but the table d'hote was bulletined over the walls so conspicuously that no one could mistake the contents of the larder, and a man could eat what was literally set before him in vast variety. There was decorative art, too, contained in this plan, for the placards were of every hue and

graceful design, calculated to lend a cheerful touch to the place and cover up the blemishes in the ancient walls.

"Pie, any kind, five cents a cut," in red letters on a black back ground covered the aperture which formerly admitted a stove-pipe.

"Pork and beans, ten cents," in red and white, masked a spot where the plaster had parted from the laths.

The oyster list, with its wide diversity of culinary treatment, all at a modest fee, obscured a long crevice which ran from the ceiling half-way to the floor.

"Sirloin steak with potatoes, twenty cents," done with artistic taste, in azure spangles on a red field, hid a furrow in the kalsomining which looked like the ricochet path of a pistol bullet.

There were innumerable other cards, which did the double duty of wall paper and price-list, and one there also was which served for neither and yet was fully as much intended for the careful inspection of guests. It hung from the ceiling by two wires in the center of the room and covered in its statement the trade of both the bar and lunch tables.

Stenciled on its white surface in blue ink was this insinuative rhyme :

To trust is bust.
To bust is hell.
No trust,
No bust,
No bust, no hell.

Sympathetic relationship existed between this Runic legend, with its cogent reasoning, and Jack's boot and the weapon behind the bar. This was well known to the steady patrons and no one ever overlooked it a second time.

At the end of the row of half-dozen tables and open to view was the *cuisine.* The wholesome and native word kitchen would on the average be preferable, but bless you, this was no kitchen, although some show of cooking was made there. A counter, which followed the front and rear line of the room for a few feet and then turned abruptly into the wall, thus enclosing a gasoline range, a bank of shelves, and an ice box, was all there was of it. The counter and shelves were loaded with exhibits of comestibles ready to be served, and a rough-looking individual with a white cap manned the stove for the gratification of those fastidious patrons who refused to eat raw oysters or wanted something on the limited cooking list. Happily enough for unsuspecting customers little of the bill of fare was prepared on the premises, and it might as well be told as a sort of confidential disclosure, although it is unprofessional, that the bread and crullers came from the baker's, the pie from a factory devoted to wholesale pie production, the pork and beans were cooked by a little German contractor in that line, the sausages similarly provided, while the coffee was boiled over night and drawn next day from a heated tank.

This sort of ready-made shelf-stock lunch business was not a monopoly of Jack by any means, but was and is quite an extensive industry, although some readers, blessed

throughout their lives with custom-made meals, may know nothing about it.

Directly opposite the *cuisine*—since that was the word agreed upon—were two *cabinets particuliers*. (If Jack had said nothing at this there were certainly several of his steady customers who would have aggressively defended the reputation of the stalls against such slander. But what with your loges, foyers, salles a manger, tables d'hote and the like in places of public resort, it is fair to parade some French even here.)

The walls of these little apartments fell short of the ceiling and their interiors were furnished with chairs and tables, the latter bare for cards and drink, and covered for occasional meals with a cloth which was an enlarged copy of the famous napkins. The service, too, was a grade finer, and although the cutlery was not silver and the crockery was something other than porcelain, the tribute to the higher prices levied within for the same fare as was spread without could be distinctly recognized.

A door in the rear communicated to a little hallway, from which a flight of stairs rose to the upper floors and another door let out on the garbage-box and the alley. The front of the house was all glass—door and show-windows masked from the bottom half-way up by faded and tattered lambrequins and plastered in every part with lithographed scenes from the numerous plays current in the theatres.

Such was Jack Larue's saloon to the eye. It is true that it did not show off to the advantage of the "art galleries"

where some people drink in other parts of town, but, goodness knows, there were hundreds of worse looking places right in the neighborhood. The inexperienced nose might have detected the taint of beer-slops, mixed drinks, and tobacco, together with the savor of indifferent cookery, but as few such organs came about, the atmosphere was popularly regarded as fresh, pleasant, and salubrious. As everything is judged by contrast there were many people who looked upon Jack's quarters as a very reputable resort.

CHAPTER V.

SOME VULGARIANS.

If from these friendly and familiar allusions to Jack and Jack's things the impression has been obtained that he was "a good fellow in the main," as they say of some hard characters who have redeeming traits, a grave error has been founded.

Jack Larue was a bad man, and we might as well get to the fact. He was a wicked, conscienceless, crafty, daring, desperate villain if there ever lived one such. Had he been born of a long and carefully selected stock of thief and drab he could not possibly have had less worthy instincts. Had he been reared in a brothel, taught the antithesis of the decalogue, carefully inculcated with the ethics of crime, he could not have been trained a more accomplished criminal. Yet he had come of good family somewhere in an eastern state and had been given early advantages for choosing a station of good citizenship. By what perversity of inclination and fatality of influence he became as we find him at the age of thirty-five it is needless to tell. The downward paths are as numerous as the boasted roads to Rome, and the philosophy of man's

fall is a subject upon which we can all moralize. Jack was wicked beyond recall. No prayers, no penalties, no influence of earth or Heaven (that Heaven cares to exercise in men's affairs) could ever turn his soul from its gloomy journey, touch his seared and necrosed mind with a single ray of noble thought, or move his sullen heart to a throb of purer animation. To such as he there are delights which their fancies seek, pleasures that their passions crave and purposes that muster their hopes, but there is a barrier between their way of life and the world, for whose sins the atonement awaits, which neither missionaries nor the law can scale.

Larue's record was as good, or bad, as his character. He had twiced served terms in the state's prison, several times escaped the statutory penalty of his crimes through the cleverness of his lawyers and the imbecility of the juries, and more often evaded detection, although a constant police suspect.

A tall and spare figure, little less than six feet in height; a face pale as the dead and hard and angular as the front of a cliff, thin aquiline nose, lips tightly drawn over sound, white teeth and grown above with a short, black mustache; eyes like spheres of jet with the glint of steel; square jaws, blued by the scrupulous shaving of a heavy beard; a low, furrowed brow; a round head covered with a thick growth of close-cropped raven hair; clothing of conspicuous cloth and cut; shirt, collars, and cuffs of colored percale; a silken cravat with a diamond stud, and white, skinny fingers hooped with gold. Such was Jack Larue in full regalia,

the saloonist, the gambler, the burglar, and the ready ruffian. Quiet, grave, and elaborately formal in his conduct under daily inspection—the devil in a dress suit at a drawing room. Mild, courteous, straightforward in glance and speech, liberal on befitting occasions where favors commanded returns, he was genteel, believe it. But witness the occasions of unconstraint! See the palsied and penniless wretch, too importunate in his appeals for gratis drink, and Jack's sharp dismissal, too laggardly obeyed, supplemented by the brutal kick. Behold the brawling insult met with ferocious and pitiless assault, the desperate emergency encountered with swift and murderous measures. Enter the circle of the midnight complot and observe Larue's awakened faculties, his experienced counsel, his far-seeing strategy, and his unquestioned authority! Peer into the unhallowed chamber of his dark home life and contemplate that woman, whose relation in other lives is the retainer of joy and heart's ease, but who is to him the sport of his moods! Such was the texture of this nature, a man of all too many twin brethren among the nightside members of this civilized generation.

On the floor above, in the rear of the house and at the head of the stairway noticed through the back door, were Larue's lodgings. At night or when the doors at the top and bottom were closed, the ascent was dark and almost perilous. The stairs were steep and old, and narrowly confined between the walls; there was no handrail. On occasions of illumination the path of groping hands could be seen plainly traced upon the walls, and those spots of dingy

plaster not defiled with dirty finger-prints were found covered with vulgar caricatures, names, initials, and unseemly rhymes. The house had sheltered in its time a numerous tenantry, and evidently none much better than its present inmates. A peep of light filtered under the door where rats had gnawed, offered a lode star for the benighted climber.

The revelation was scarcely worth all the toil of ascent, for here was only a short, uncarpeted and ill-conditioned hallway, running from a window on the left to a board partition a dozen feet to the right, while a door on either side of the passage promised means of further progress if one cared or dared proceed. The hallway was actually much longer, extending to the front, where another stairway dropped to the street. Along its length were rooms for low lodgings, but, as there were no women and children in the rooms, the house was quiet—suspiciously so. Larue, desiring closer seclusiveness, had obtained the agent's permission to build the wooden partition which blocked the hall and gave him exclusive use of the rear rooms and the back stairs.

The same genial noontide, whose serenity in Rupert Square had been disturbed by Thomas' misadventure, brooded upon the "Levee." The same peace mastered the scene, save that the drowsy lay of birds and insects was supplanted by the monotonous hum of traffic not far distant on every hand. From the open windows of Larue's apartments a brick and stone miscellany of rear elevations and sheds, a vista of back yards and uninviting areas, a

panoramic succession of ash-heaps and garbage-boxes, a wide litter of refuse, was revealed beyond the alley. There were evil smells, and the eye fasted amid squalor and neglect. Yet so quiet was the hour that the roll of the scavenger's cart through the alley seemed like a rude irruption, and heads directing sleepy inquiries were thrust from windows here and there.

But for his own uproar, the scavenger, as he drove by, might have heard from Larue's window, just overhead, a sound. It would have commanded his passing attention, for it was an odd sound for the time and place, and although quite low would have been plainly audible to him. It was the voice of a woman crooning an air. There was no hint of quality in the voice nor any striking melody in the theme—a mere bit of new vaudeville sentimentality, done softly and in indifferent fashion. The suggestion of contentment, however, would have caught him. He would have glanced upward to see the possessor of a spirit so evidently at peace in this colony of troubled souls, although he might not have thought to analyze his own impulse. He did not hear the strain, nor did the singer observe him, which was so much of experience lost to both; for the scavenger at his work is an instructive object, in a way, and a tuneful woman always a worthy sight.

Bess Burton, as she sat at the window and sang, was the sole exception to the truth of the declaration that the house was without a female occupant. However, as she was Jack Larue's wife and part of his establishment, her exclusion from first consideration is in a measure pardonable.

Bess Burton had little right to sing—blessed little right to peace of mind—as an orderly community would regard her. She was comely, but her beauty was so battered that the paints and cosmetic needed to repair it betrayed her on the streets. She was tall and graceful, but her carriage was a dash for notice. Her wardrobe was fine, too fine; her hair, which nature had tinted brown, bore the evidence of tampering dyes and bleaches; her full, blue eyes were in turn dull and unnaturally lustrous, as the order of the day went. She looked every inch what she was, and had better been at penance that sultry noon than sitting about, unkempt and slatternly, singing. Bess had small advantage in point of moral record and reputation over the man to whom she stood in a wife's relation. She was an exile from her parental family. She had father, mother, brothers, sisters; but in their offended sight, no prison was too noisome and secure, no burial-field too obscure and unconsecrated, for her. Why, it had been a notable scandal a year before, when unable to pay a heavy fine for a particularly flagrant disorder she had been sentenced to the bridewell, that this beautiful wanton was the daughter of Mr. So-and-So, the good citizen of Such-and-Such, not far distant. It was Jack Larue who, after an unexampled failure to break the judgment of the court, paid her fine and gave her thenceforth an abode.

Like many such women of good origin Bess sought always to suppress all consideration of her situation and the future of a life misspent by assumed recklessness, studied avoidance of reflection, banishment of memory,

and compulsory gayety, with frequent resort to the nepenthe of drink and drugs. Yet there were times like surprises, when Remorse stole in upon her consciousness, the gloomy curtains that flanked her path were torn aside and a flood of sudden light revealed her woful plight. Such moments brought their honest tears and genuine heartaches.

From just such an emotional attack had Bess recovered as she sat presumptuously singing. A bit of wedding notice in the social column of the paper which had casually fallen to her hand had touched the key. The name of the bride or the groom—perhaps of both, had once been familiar. Being alone, she threw herself upon the bed and wept bitterly and long. When at last she arose she experienced surprise that she had not determined, as usual on such occasions, to flee from her tears to dissipation. A sense of resignation without fixed contrition, a feeling of peace without reform resolves, a totally inexplicable and half-magical spell of contentment possessed her, and giving tune to her thoughts she resumed the small task she had temporarily abandoned. She was darning a sock, part of the scant apparel of Jack's boy. Jack's son? No, although Jack never went to lengths to explain; in fact, nobody cared for the explanation—his ward. But Bess darning a sock! She didn't often do it, to be sure, but the damaged article in the new wash had come to her attention, and she liked the boy, sympathized with his neglected condition, and there was not much else to do on such a lazy day. Well, she had a remnant of the good heart that was

born in her and was the very chaplet of her charms in years agone.

A quarter of an hour had passed and she was still stitching and singing when a scuffle of feet on the stairs, succeeded by the unceremonious opening of her door, heralded a visitor.

It was the ward, flushed, hot, and to a degree excited.

"Say, Bess, where's Jack? I can't find him downstairs. But, my," gasped the youth in a breath, "I've had a high old time. I must tell Jack. I had a man pinched—a feller in a swell house, too," and with a great sense of importance he spread out his coat skirts (sic) and capered around the room. "I'm a genooine, full-blown prosucuting witness, I am, and I'll swear him up for ten year. Got to show up in the armory to-morrer morn' an' testify. Jeemimy crickets, what a figger I'll cut."

Bess smiled at the boy's enthusiasm, but was actually aroused to little interest, as a new vagary on his part was a mere chapter to a tiresome story in daily instalments. She was content to notice that he had once more escaped serious casualty and the clutch of the police. The red and swollen cheek, in open evidence of Thomas' lusty blow, amounted to little in the long list of disfigurating cuts and bruises the boy had brought home from time to time. She merely inquired what he had done to merit the punishment this time.

"Done?" he ejaculated with great show of offended feeling. "I done nothin'. That's why the collar run him in. He hit me for nothin'; jest fer luck, or fer instance,

maybe. I don't know. All I know is dat I was knocked out clean silly. Oh, you just wait till you hear the copper tell about it."

The boy proceeded at some length to narrate the incident, putting the facts through contortions creditable to himself, and characterizing Thomas the while as "a chump," "a guy," "a mark," "a nine spot," and sundry other weird and inscrutable beings, known only in the ethnology of the slums. He paused in his recital at last, upon noticing the woman's occupation.

"Say, Bess," he said, drawing closer to her and toning his voice down, "that looks like something of mine. What'er yer doin' with it?"

"I'm mending it. Can't you see?" she replied laughing.

"Mendin' it," he echoed, now in a very low voice with a vague, constrained stress upon the words, as though he was half grasping their meaning, "Well, it needs mendin', dats sure, an' I'm awfully much obliged to you Bess. But you needn't take the trouble. What do I keer for socks anyhow, and it's too much trouble for you to be a-sewin' an' a-worryin aroun' about my rags. Lor', if yer ever got started you'd work out a life sentence widout gettin' anythin' like through wid ther job."

The boy laughed nervously as he glanced down at his ragged clothing and shot a troubled look at the seamstress who took such practical interest in his own graceless self. Oh, he felt it, and his eyes blinked and danced under pressure of tears.

"Bess, you've ben mighty good to me, you have, an'

if I on'y knowed how I c'u'd do somethin' to kinder square up, I'd do it, but seems ter me like the best I kin do is ter get yer into more trouble. When yer begs fer me when Jack's hammerin' me an' he turns around an' thumps you, an' sometimes when he beats you for nothin', I feels horrible like, an' whole nights I lays and cries 'cause I'm sorry fer yer. So bein' as how I makes things worse sometimes by bein' here, suppose I screws out. Ther' an't much ter my little old cubby-hole across the hall, nohow, an' I kin shine an' sell papers an' live wid ther gang at Tom's or the newsboys' home. An' I'll drop around an' see yer at times an' kinder report to Jack. I'd like to work Jack up ter ther scheme. I'd go, anyhow, 'cept dat ther last time I rund away for more'n two days Jack was crazy mad, and after purty nigh chawin' me up he swore that ther next time I skipped he'd send me ter ther reform school. I can't see what makes him so dead set on havin' me around, 'cause he don't seem to be pertickerly stuck on me."

Bess had been thinking as the boy spoke and she turned to him and said :

"Harry, do you remember your mother at all ? "

"N-o-o," replied the boy slowly, as though reflecting. "Jack said one time when I ast him dat I never had none ; dat I wuz jest his kid and because I didn't have no mudder dat was de reason I was so scan'loosly wuss dan oder kids."

"Harry, think," urged Bess. "Haven't you any memory of a time before you came to Jack ? "

"Naw, nothing sure," said the boy. "I do seem though sometimes when I'm layin' in bed wakey-dreamy, dat I can

remember a time, 'way 'way back, when I had little curls and good clean clothes and was washed and dressed and wasn't allowed to hustle in the dirt and fight and steal, dat I had plenty uv good things to eat and a white, soft bed o'nights and dat dere was a man—a real gentleman, a sure enough fadder who was hones' and handsome. And dat dere wuz a lady—a good kind lady, as good to me, Bess, as you—but, oh, Bess, she was a genooyne lady—wid a lovin' face and a pretty voice and she knowed little rock-a-byes dat she used to sing ter me, and now in my little ole cubby-hole acrost de hall sometimes it seems ter me, when I falls asleep, dat I feels her rocking and hear her singing, oh, so sweet and soft, and de bed grows white wid little flimsy curtains like in de stores, and my hair twists and draws out into little curls and my face is clean and de good lady stoops over and kisses me and smiles, and I rocks, rocks, rocks, to de little tune till dat's all and I'm asleep."

Bess folded him in her arms.

"But dat's jest a dream like I guess every feller has," Hackles said, "and after all I never had nobody half so good to me as you, Bess."

She drew him close to her and kissed him.

In the moment of that act, shadows blacker than night were lifted from the despised woman's soul and the heart of the nameless orphan swelled with a joy it never knew before.

Instantly the spell was broken, for a heavy tread at the threshold announced the advent of the lord and master,

and such scenes were known to be at variance with his tastes. He entered as Bess relinquished her embrace.

"Well, I'll swear this is great," ejaculated Larue, "a weeping love feast. What are you doing up here, you monkey-faced little devil?"

The boy gulped and gasped through a brief statement of the incident in Rupert Spuare.

"Well, that's cute, I must say. I'll go up with you in the morning. Clear out now," and the ward's flight was precipitated by a threatened kick.

CHAPTER VI.

EVEN-HANDED JUSTICE.

"Call court, Mr. Clerk," puffed the judge, as he threw his coat and hat on a peg behind the tribunal and flung himself into the judgment seat.

The clerk seized the lid of his ink-stand, and, rapping sharply on his desk, remarked in one short breath and without looking up: "Year he! Year he! 'Sonorable court 'snowinsessh'n."

The honorable court then in session was the great First precinct police judicatory, known as "the armory," the occasion being its customary morning assize.

The room was big and black and bare, the light of day gaining but a dismal showing through the grimy panes of the several windows on one side. A huge and insecurely-jointed stovepipe, sustained by wires from the ceiling, stretched from an unsightly stove near the center to an aperture in the flue at a farther corner. Heavy iron stanchions supporting the uncovered trusses of the roof obstructed the view here and there. On the side opposite the windows, folding-doors, so blackened and disfigured that no trace of graining was left, communicated to the muster-room;

for the building was also a police station, with a lock-up in the cellar. Calculating the length of the rectangle described by the room, front and rear, you would say that you entered at one end through an alley door, and that the judge's bench was at the other extremity. A hybrid and rickety assortment of old school-benches accommodated a portion of the crowd of loafers, more or less interested spectators, such as friends of the prisoners, ladies from the Society for the Suppression of Vice, and other charitable or morbidly inclined personages—witnesses, and culprits out on bail. The remainder stood up in the narrow aisles and against the walls. The judge sat behind a desk on a raised platform, which some might call a dais. Two small railed inclosures before and below him constituted the dock and witness-box. To his right, in a penned-in area of their own, amid a disorder of chairs and stools, sat the motley crew constituting "the bar" of the honorable court. On his left hand and within reach his clerk was mounted. Behind this scribbling expert in fees and justice-shop jugglery were grouped the policemen waiting to prosecute their arrest of the previous day and night. Beyond them and let into the rear wall was a small door. It led to the prisoners' waiting-room, anciently known as the "bull pen," whither, up a subterranean stairway, the offenders were driven from the keeps below, and where they abided, in a miserable throng of all grades and sexes, the fates in store. At the court's very elbows, on either side, were two young men whose freedom of manner would have excited the very natural belief that they were associate justices. They were actually newspaper

reporters, who liberally acted upon their privilege to rummage the documents at first-hand, throw quips and jest at the officers, and whisper into the judge's ear wholly inadmissible evidence for or against the defendants as their sentiments ran.

The magistrate himself was a bald, white-mustached, wiry little man, whose fame rested better on political organization than jurisprudence. Of fairly kind heart among his friends, some misconception of duty, together with long experience, had conspired to make him a very model of magisterial severity.

"Great Scoot! Two hundred cases?" he exclaimed. "I've got an appointment at noon. Rush it through. Call the first case."

It was then 9 o'clock. Three hours given to dispose of two hundred criminal cases.

"Mary Kilday—Officer Simmons," called the clerk.

The door of the pen opened, Officer Simmons vanished through it, and an instant later emerged dragging the whimpering and ragged wreck of a woman. He hauled her into the dock and held her in a half-standing posture against the rail. A light laugh went the rounds as the familiar figure was recognized.

"Officer be sworn" commanded the judge.

The policeman raised his disengaged arm and subscribed with a nod to the court's swift utterance—"D'you sol'mly swear th' evidence y'give in this case'll be the truth, the whole truth, and nothin' but the truth, s'help you God!"—with a round emphasis on the invocation. "State your case officer."

At 11 o'clock last night I met this woman roaming about drunk on Van Buren street near the depot. She swore at me and wouldn't go home, so I brought her in. She is an old-timer."

"Oh heaven help ye, officer, how can ye say that?" cried the old woman, lifting her rum-ruined countenance and whining through her tears with the most lugubrious effect. "I didn't say a word to him yer honor.

"Didn't I fine you twenty-five dollars at your last appearance some time ago?" demanded the judge.

"You did, yer honor, and I was just after servin' me time yisterday, an' the first minute I shows meself on the streets the officer arrested me, an', oh yer honor, let me off this once an' heaven's blessin's—"

"I guess not; you're a public nuisance," interrupted the judge. "I'll make it fifty dollars this time and see if that will do any good. Take her away. Next!"

"Hold on! stop, stop right here. Who's smoking that onion?" he cried, looking up and sniffing the air.

There was an instant stir throughout the chamber, and twenty policemen leaped forward to scrutinize the crowd. A little thread of blue smoke ascending from a group in the rear betrayed the culprit, a shabby youth with a cigarette, and the next moment he was dragged, pale and trembling, to the bar.

"Don't you know better than to smoke in court?" roared his honor, with an intimidating scowl at the wretched offender, who was too thoroughly upset to reply. "I'll fine you five dollars—part for contempt and part for bad judgment of tobacco."

The smoker was whirled out of the dock, and a great laugh went up, which a police lieutenant suppressed with a censorious "Silence in court," while the judge chuckled and dug the reporters in the ribs.

"Hurry up; I'm squandering precious time," he urged, straightening his features, and addressing his clerk.

"Joseph Mack, Henry Tethers, and Luke Blyth—Nathan Finkelstein and Officer Carmore," called the clerk.

Three small boys, defiant and grinning, had snatched some shoes and hats from the front of Mr. Finkelstein's emporium, and—"Two hundred dollars to the Criminal Court," ordered the judge.

A ridiculous law limiting the jurisdiction of justices necessitated the expense and tedium of a formal indictment and a detention of the boys in a notoriously overcrowded and demoralizing jail before they could be "punished" for their small offense.

"Roger O'Day—Officer Mehaffy!"

A rough-looking young man appeared, making an effort to swagger despite the swift propulsion given him by the officer.

"You're charged with vagrancy. Guilty or not guilty?" said the judge.

"Not guilty," muttered the defendant, glowering at the policeman.

"Endade he's not," put in an old woman, with a shawl over her head, stepping into the dock.

"Shut up and stand back," ordered the officer, shoving the woman, holding his prisoner, and taking the oath in one sweeping performance.

"This Roger O'Day is the worst young rascal in the Third ward. He don't work and spends all his time around corners shooting the can."

"Hold on! What do you mean by shooting the can?" interrupted the court.

"Why, rushing the growler, of course," retorted the officer, looking up reproachfully.

"What?" And the judge's voice rang high.

"I mean sending the bucket for beer," said the somewhat crestfallen officer, "and making a nuisance of himself generally."

"Well, that's better. Be careful henceforth to confine your charges to the statutory provisions, and to address this court in straight English. I'll fine Mr. O'Day twenty-five dollars, as a sort of warning."

"The powers preserve us!" ejaculated the old woman, who was evidently the boy's mother; "ben't ye goin' to give me and the b'y a chance to say somethin'. He's innercent, yer worship. He's a hard-working b'y. It's the p'liceman that's got a spite ag'in the lad.

Some commotion and a trifling delay was created by the forcible removal of this obstreperous lady. As she was lugged off struggling, she shrieked, shaking her fist at the prosecuting officer: "Oi'll git even wid ye for this day's work, Micky Mehaffy. Ye jist wait till ye git a night beat in our patch."

"Wing Lee, Ah Sam, Sing Foo, and about fifteen more like that," laughed the clerk, reading from the docket.

The door of the pen was thrown wide open and a score

of Chinamen were dragged, pushed and hustled out, and herded in front of the tribunal. The informing officer told how he had raided them out of a basement resort "on the Levee" the night before. They were playing some inscrutable game.

"I want to say, yer honor," spoke up one of the lawyers who had been retained for the defense through some mysterious agency, "that yesterday was a kind of holiday among the Chinese, and last night these boys (those familiar with the Chinese always term them boys) met in Wing Lee's Laundry for a social time."

"A social time is no excuse for gambling. Here are the dice and chips, and the officers heard the chink of coin, although the scamps managed to hide their money. That's enough, and I fine them five dollars each."

The Chinamen met the assessment and filed out.

"Stanislaus Rszwitzki" was written on the sheet, but the clerk shied it and said: "Officer Matzki, bring in your prisoner,"

This Polish officer had his compatriot booked for drunk and disorderly, and pompously conducted him into the dock.

The judge sputtered over the name, and then smiled savagely at the prisoner.

"Dees man war droonk," explained the officer, "las' night, and when I tole him go home he called me de lost soul of a dead pig and de hide of a skinned mule. It's mooch shorter in Polsk, but it mean de same and is very bad name."

The crowd wanted to laugh again, but vigorous rappings

from half a dozen quarters abated the merriment. The miserable culprit stared vacantly at the judge, and when asked what he had to say, shook his head hopelessly.

"I'll fine you ten dollars and hope you'll understand that," snapped the court.

The prisoner brightened up, and, pointing toward the muster-room, where the desk sergeant had relieved him of his belongings the night before, said pleadingly, "Me six dols. Please."

"No, sir ; not by a long shot," retorted his honor. "Six dollars ain't enough. A man with a name like yours ought to be fined ten dollars."

For the law that licenses drunkenness at the rate of ten dollars and imprisons men who cannot pay the tax the judge is not responsible, but his remarks in this case were brutal and scandalous, you might say. But just such incidents are characteristic features of these lawful morning proceedings the long year round.

The mill ground on. High crimes, low crimes, misdemeanors, and violations of every imaginable statute and ordinance were passed upon in bewildering succession. Thefts, debauches, domestic rows, and neighborhood quarrels, acutely pathetic and immensely funny, came up for adjudication, and few were the acquittals on any ground.

It may be of interest to contribute the fact here that (by actual observations made through a period of some years) there was an average of one case out of every seven brought to trial in which liquor was not directly concerned.

In almost all the crimes against person the offenders

were under the influence of liquor, while of the thefts the culprits were often drunk and were always men of drinking habits, for if there be a tramp, a thief, a house-breaker, or assassin who is not a drinker of strong drink, he is but the exception that confirms a very positive rule

There are those interested in saying that the saloons of Chicago (where the excise tax and the fines from the police courts are converted to the school fund) support the public schools. Granted, but one hundred times the amount needed each year in the schools is spent in the direct purchase and sale of liquor within the city and—what is it that trebles the police, judiciary, penal, and asylum systems? But here we are arguing to the jury with the evidence not half in.

Fines and imprisonment, commitments to the higher court, orders to leave town within twenty-four hours came so thick and fast that Thomas scarcely recognized his own name when it was called. From his seat near the front he had regarded the swift proceedings in open-mouthed amaze, and understanding them so little that he had neither smiled nor felt a pang. Mr. Jarvis, at his side, too self-controlled for any sign of emotion, had worn a countenance unusually severe and given little apparent heed to surroundings as a sort of compromise with the abasement he suffered by being present.

Larue and his ward, farther back in the house, had seen something of this before and rather enjoyed it, the boy lending his voice loudly to the frequent but always aborted laughter.

"Thomas Rawson," shouted the clerk for the second time, "Officer Scanlon."

Vexed at the delay, the policeman pounced upon Thomas, and jerking him to his feet, gave him a start toward the dock. Mr. Jarvis arose and followed slowly. Larue and his ward were already in the box.

"Hold up your hands, all of you, and be sworn," roared the judge.

Thomas raised his left hand, which the officer instantly slapped down with the muttered injunction: "Your right hand, you gump."

Thoroughly demoralized, the unfortunate Thomas obeyed and mumbled some incoherent reply to the oath. Stating his case, the officer said: "I was passing Rupert Square, at the south end, yesterday noon and I saw this man hit this boy a very brutal and so far as I know unprovoked blow. The boy fell into the gutter, and when I picked him up he was insensible. I arrested the man and he gave bonds right away."

"What's your name, boy?" queried the judge, turning to the ward.

"Harry"—and, as the boy hesitated, his guardian prompted: "Larue."

"Yes, Harry Larue, but de boys calls me Hackles, and sometimes I'm called—"

"Never mind," sternly interrupted the judge, just as Larue checked the boy with a slight kick. "Now, what happened between you and this man?"

"W'y I wuz comin' along through de square an' he

steps out from a door and smashes me. I wuzn't doin' nothin'."

With a freezing smile upon the boy's depraved manner of speech, the judge directed himself to the defendant, and said : "Well, Thomas Rawson, what have you got to say to all this ?"

"The young villain hit me with a stone," muttered the servant, too far unmanned to summon distinct utterance.

"May it please the court," interposed Mr. Jarvis, "I saw this whole affair. The man is my servant, and I would like to testify.

"You may, certainly," replied his honor condescendingly. "Be sworn. What is your name and address ?"

"Henry T. Jarvis, 50 Rupert Square."

There were two men in the room who started visibly at this response.

One was Larue, who leaned over his ward and gazed intently at the face of the new witness; the other was Officer Kinnane, who, standing back among the spectators, reached instinctively toward his pocket, where a letter was stored, and made a mental registry of 50 Rupert Square.

Mr. Jarvis, oblivious of these attentions, proceeded: "The boy was throwing stones in the street. My servant unadvisedly corrected him. The boy then struck him with a stone and he returned the assault with a blow. I cannot deprecate the affair too much, but as the officer refused to take cognizance of the provocation, I thought it best to inform the court."

"Very well sir," replied the judge graciously.

"What do you say to that?" turning fiercely upon the boy.

"Did yer hear him say dat I was peggin' rocks?" gasped Hackles with a well-affected showing of outraged feeling. "W'y your honer dey ain't a rock in the whole of Roopit Square. It's as smooth as dis floor. I'll leave it to the officer or anybody yer wants ter send dere."

Larue, who was still absorbed in contemplation of Mr. Jarvis' face, could not repress a faint smile at his ward's ingenuity. Mr Jarvis accorded the boy a pitying glance. Thomas, awakened to sudden life, blurted out: "Why, the boy had a pocketful of stones."

"Ha! Ha!" intoned his honor, menacingly. "You seem to be a graceless little scamp, and deserved all you got. If the officer had done his duty he would have arrested you. However, I dismiss this case."

The litigating party rapidly cleared the way for those to succeed, although Thomas, relapsing into stupor, had to be shown the way out of the dock, a service which the officer performed for him with more directness than gentleness. Beholding his master pushing on through the crowd, the servant stumbled into the trail and forced his way to the exit. At the door, Larue, who had skirted the walls and gained that point first, accosted Mr. Jarvis.

"Excuse me," he said hurriedly, and with an earnestness of manner at variance with his smooth style of formal address, "is this Henry T. Jarvis of Philadelphia?"

At the first sign of detention by Larue, Mr. Jarvis had frowned uncompromisingly. At this direct inquiry he start-

ed to his full height, his brows gathered into knots, and his eyes transfixed Larue with hostile scrutiny.

"It is," he replied curtly, the fire in his glance gleaming steadily.

"Then one word," exclaimed Larue, who had bent strainedly upon the reply. He leaned forward and whispered.

The tense lines of Mr. Jarvis' countenance vanished, his brows relaxed, his eyes beamed with welcome surprise, and his lips half parted in a muscular play akin to a smile. He nodded acquiescingly, as Larue, breaking from his guarded tone, said, half aloud: "Can I see you?"

"Then you must come to me. The police watch me too close to risk my going to you," resumed the saloonist, dropping back to a whisper with rapid utterance. "My street and number are correct in the directory—John Larue—2 o'clock to-morrow afternoon. Take the alley door if you choose."

As others were pressing for egress, Larue said no more, and, not waiting for a rejoinder to his ex-parte assignation, he caught Hackles by the arm and hastened out and away. Mr. Jarvis, now thoughtful-eyed, followed leisurely into the street, and, calling a cab, drew Thomas therein and was whipped for home.

Officer Kinnane had covertly witnessed the meeting. Although he heard not a word of it, he drew conclusions and laid plans accordingly.

"I'll see what 'the mysterious' Mr. Jarvis and that bird, Larue, lay their heads together for," he said to himself with a melancholy setting of his features.

CHAPTER VII.

THE VANISHING MAN.

LARUE walked directly to his saloon and strode its full length, unmindful of the obsequious recognitions accorded him by sundry loungers at his bar and diners at his board who had congregated in his absence. He jerked open the back door, slammed it behind him, and tramped up the stairs. He opened and closed, as he proceeded, the two doors which gave access from the stairs to his room with such violence that a succession of reverberating jars went through the house.

The assemblage at the bar grinned nervously and one particularly crapulous customer remarked: "I wouldn't like to run afoul Jack jest at this minute," and he bundled his coat about him with a mock shiver.

Above stairs Larue swept the room with an angry glance, and, noting its vacancy, stamped his foot, muttering, with an oath: "She's not here." Further shaking his head in a fashion that boded no good to the absent one, he started to retrace his steps. The dull booming of the doors and the heavy tread on the stairs apprised the guests of the master's return, and several of the most timid, who cher-

ished all too vivid recollections of Jack's thunder-gusts, shuffled out at the door.

There was less of ire than of suppressed excitement—the excitement of great news suddenly received and clamoring to reach a confidant—in Jack's emotions, for after growling at the bar-keeper, "Where's Bess?" and being told by that ready functionary that she had gone out in full dress an hour before with a promise of speedy return, he took to a jovial humor and petrified the "house" by calling it collectively to the bar.

"Come up, all you ducks," he cried with a sweeping command, "and hit the wine sack with me. All up—no foolishness. I made a ten-strike on the open board and am celebrating," he ordered imperatively, as some of the too utterly surprised guests hung back staring.

With this re-assurance the rush to the front was general, and in a moment the whole crew was ranged along the bar in a crowded line.

"All shout! What's your weakness?" cried Larue.

The bartender traveled down the line taking orders.

"Skee."

"Same here."

"Red eye."

"Yaller lick."

"Me too."

"Little soda on de side."

"Joy juice and lemon."

As all signified "whiskey," the servitor had the bottles and glasses produced in a trice. With the deft hand of a

conjurer he applied to the raw poison the infusion of lemon or bitters as required. Each party decanted his potion, passing the bottle to his neighbor, and in an incredibly brief moment all hands were served. There was an instant of delay for Jack, who ordered a "schnit," and was intelligently given a small glass of beer. He felt that he had need of sobriety that day and so governed himself.

"Well, here's looking at you," he said, raising his glass.

"Here's how!" the chorus toasted in return, although one fellow chose to vary with "many happy days," and an old unseaworthy mariner huskily roared through a verse of a drinking song.

The glasses went up all together and their scarifying contents vanished like a flash. A salacious clearing of throats and smacking of lips as the glasses came down testified to the gratifying emotion awakened by Jack's munificence and the searching beverage.

"Well, that's all for you snoozers. Now about two-thirds of you clear out. A half a dozen of you are neither producers or ornaments."

Jack was lapsing into his wonted way. His mandate needed no repetition. The majority of the late revelers scaled themselves under the order of proscription, treating Jack to a parting salvo of thanks, vanished with their whiskers and rags into the street. The few remaining laughed patronizingly at the exiles and then ordered more drinks among themselves. Jack glanced at his watch, and noting that it was 1.30 o'clock, walked to the rear and entered one of the stalls.

A few minutes later a man opened the front door and, with his hands in his pockets, drifted leisurely toward the bar, appearing to scrutinize the placards and chromos on the walls. As his eyes traveled the circuit of the room he gave the bartender a sharp, inquiring glance, to which the latter, without seeming recognition, replied by furtively jerking his thumb toward the rear. The man drifted on even more slowly, stopping here to take in the details of the ever-memorable Heenan-Sayers fight, there the race between the Robert E. Lee and the Natchez, and now the jump-start of Ten Broek and Mollie McCarty, all treasured to posterity in vivid prints beyond the big cooler at the end of the bar. At times he wheeled about and retreated a step as though to obtain a better impression of some detail of the scenes, or further admire a meritorious feature of the artistic work. His eye, in these evolutions, bent a swift but no less comprehensive glance upon the occupants of the room, and in a moment he drifted on. In this wise he had traversed quite the length of the house, and had long since lost the attention slightly accorded him when he entered. He was set down without saying it as a "jay" from the back districts who had never seen a first-class dram-shop before. At one moment, when there was certainly no one regarding him, he disappeared. If any one in the house took later notice of his absence he did so with the belief that the gawking stranger had drifted out of the back door and tumbled into the ash-box.

The stranger had in fact joined Larue in the farthest stall.

"Well," was the saloonist's wholly expressionless greeting.

The man vouchsafed no recognition, but threw himself into a chair facing Larue across the table and glowered at him.

"You seem to be in a beautiful temper, Scout," remarked Larue, breaking petulantly under the man's ugly gaze.

"I am, by God!" exclaimed the other, starting violently from his seat with clenched and upraised hand, as though to emphasize his feeling upon the table. He desisted, however, at Larue's queer smile and warning gesture toward the outer room, and fell back with a surly scowl.

"First of all I'm hungry; give me something to eat," he growled.

Larue nodded approvingly and rapped on the table. The brigand disguised as a cook, who presided at the counter a few feet away, came to the door and took Larue's order of oysters and beer.

"Come off," snarled the scout, "I don't want no lollypops. I want a genuine feed. Make it steak, potatoes, a cup of coffee, and plenty of bread."

Larue altered the order accordingly, and the cook swaggered back to his gasoline stove, adjusted its mechanism, while he repeated the order to himself. "To come in ther blood wid er Dutch fry, one an' ther black an' er bakery on ther side."

Bill Minton was called "The Scout" because he had served a term of enlistment in the regular army at a frontier post, and this feature of his record offered the sobriquet which no member of the criminal class can escape. "The

Scout" was his recognized title, even in police circles, where he was also characterized as the "ex-convict;" for although not more than thirty years of age, Minton had done penal as well as military service in the time. He was a heavy-set, low-statured, hard-muscled, mean-visaged, and roughly clad fellow, well calculated to inspire suspicion wherever encountered.

"Well, this is tough," he muttered.

"What are you kicking about now?" demanded Larue, angrily. "Here you come along with a face like a chief mourner, grumbling and kicking about God knows what. Stop it now and come down to business."

"It's different with me than it is with you, Jack Larue," rejoined the scout, quite as positively, and in tones of deep feeling. "You've got a nice thing of it here with plenty to eat and a regular lodging, and can go where you like without a shadow on every step you take. Will you think a bit how it is with me? Have I got any honest excuse to give the police for being in this town? Do I dare come out on the streets at night? Suppose I'm pinched with these on me?" and he tapped his inner coat pocket, which gave back a metallic rattle. "McMasters has a half-dozen cases he can trump up and put on me and give me twenty years under the habitual act the first minute he thinks I've worn out my welcome here. All he needs is a little house-breaking on the North side for which he can't find the man. You know just how hard it would be to prove it on to me. You know just how hard it was for him to convict Tally "the Toucher," Jim Comisky, "Thimblerig" Joe, and

some others of the old gang who are doing time to-day for jobs they never did. That's why I'm kicking. I can't stay here and I won't. I'm going to get out the end of this week, if I never see another ounce of graft. Now, I came here at your bidding to do this job. I've been here three weeks and have done my part and am ready. I said in the first place, if you'd plan the act and get the third man, I'd have the tools and do a leading share of the hard work. Now, here's the tools—where's your plans and your third man? You've got to come to the front this week. Never mind your hard looks. You know you can't bluff me, Jack. You've got to, d'ye hear? You've also got to give me a little stuff right this minute—say a five, because I'm broke; I haven't got a sou markee, and I'll not starve just to please you."

The scout ended his long complaint abruptly, resting defiantly on the last utterance as though he expected and was willing to meet Jack's violent rejoinder, Larue had long since leaned far back in his chair with his hands folded, his lip curled in a sneer, and his eyes fastened coldly upon the scout. He permitted a long pause to ensue and then said slowly, "I've let you talk; talk a long while; talk like no crook, cracksman, or any living man ever talked to me before, but I'm not mad. You're sore on account of the delay and you think it's my fault. You say you're broke, and to show you that I mean to be square here's ten."

Larue drew a roll of bills from his pocket, singled from it a ten-dollar bill, and threw it across the table.

"But," he resumed, now bending forward, his dark looks vanishing and his face assuming an expression of business-like earnestness, "you're wrong about me. I ain't so foot-loose from the police as you think, although perhaps in not as bad a way as you, and I have to work slow. However, I'm ready. I've got the plans, I've got several things needed, and I've got the third man."

"Who is he?" eagerly inquired the scout.

"Never mind, you'll meet him in due time. He's all right and a fellow of as much, maybe more, experience than 'oth of us. You've got the tools, eh? You say you have, but have you? Do you remember that you had them when you first came, but I showed you that they wouldn't do the work. Have you fixed that point? You said you could and if you have we're ready for the job to-morrow night.

"I've got the tools and they'll do the work," replied the scout emphatically, as he produced from his coat a steel-worker's drill and several sharp bits. From another pocket he drew a piece of sheet-iron as large as a man's hand and an eighth of an inch thick. Both men instantly spread deeper caution upon their manners. Larue softly tried the locked door to satisfy himself of its security against intrusion, cast a stealthy eye up, down and about and resumed his seat with injunction to his companion to speak henceforth in whispers.

"Here they are," continued the scout, "and I'll bet my head that they'll chew through a sword blade in a minute. I've tempered them three times over, in wax and quick-silver."

"All right, we'll see, and while we see, we'll see to something else," replied Larue. He took up the table-cloth, folded it into a thick, small bolt, pressed it firmly upon the table and laid upon it the piece of iron. He then laid his watch open upon the table. The scout adjusted one of the bits to the brace and rising to his feet set the point down upon the iron sheet. Jack held it firmly upon the cloth and, with his eye on the watch, whispered "Go." The scout bore down and vigorously turned the little ratcheted wheel, which, communicating its rotations with multiplied speed through the cogs, set the bit to rapidly piercing the iron amid a generous sloughing of metal shavings. Suddenly he lurched slightly forward and drew the drill from the thoroughly perforated iron.

"That's good," observed Jack; "only twenty-three seconds. Now, let's see some more. Have you got a bit of string?"

The scout had no string, but easily brought out some ravelings from the lining of his coat. Larue took the longest thread and circled the upper-arm of the scout, marked its length and took its measure with a pocket foot-rule.

"Fifteen inches—pretty good muscle," he said with a little laugh. "Now, for the rest."

He measured the diameter of the hole in the iron, remarking: "A third of an inch. Five-sixteenths will do, allowing just enough for each hole to cut into the other, and now let's see."

With a pencil on the back of an old envelope he began to calculate, saying slowly as he proceeded: "In 15 inches

there are 250 sixteenths. Five into 250 goes 50 times. Whew! it'll take 50 holes to get out a piece big enough to get a hole with working-room for your arm or mine either. Now, let's see as to time. Fifty times 23 is 1,150. Knock off the naughts and 6 goes into 115, 19 times—twenty minutes. Scout! it'll take a good half hour to get through the shutters and then five minutes more to work the window. Does it seem long?"

It ain't as short as I might want it, but it ain't a patchin' to the time needed to get into a good strong box. You remember the nine hours hard work Saturday night and Sunday forenoon we put in on Meyer and Linster's safe two years ago," replied the scout with a smile at the recollection of that daring exploit.

"That's true enough, and counting all, the job's a short one. Twenty minutes will do the rest of it. I'm going to stake lots on this play, and, by heaven, I'll make a haul worth the risks. You'll have to take your news along, Scout, and be fixed to meet the devil if he calls. I swear before God that I'll not be balked, and if I'm pinched I'll make the case one to swing for."

Larue spoke in low and hurried tones, his nerves tense with the passion of his purpose, while he ground his fist down upon the table which, but for caution, he could have split for emphasis. The scout's eyes applauded his chief's resolution, and he said cheerfully: "Well, there's a clear twenty thou' in it and my share will get me out of this burg and keep me a good boy for quite a spell, I guess."

A tread, the rattle of dishes, and a gentle knock without

announced the readiness of the scout's meal. Jack rose swiftly and muttered through the panel, "yes, wait a bit," leaned over the scout and whispered "to-morrow night goes, that's settled. Mind you be here a little before twelve so that I can lock you in the saloon at closing time without attracting notice. All my part will be fixed and the third party will be here. Say no more, that's all. Meanwhile lay close to cover."

Jack opened the door, admitted the cook, and walked to the front of the saloon, where for the remainder of the afternoon he presided in turn before and behind the bar.

Later, he strolled back to the farthest stall. It was vacant and had been so for hours. The scant debris and the crockery service of the scout's repast had been removed. The scout himself had gone. No one had seen him go. Jack, as he peered in, chuckled: "Now you see it and now you don't. The scout's got that business down fine anyway."

CHAPTER VIII.

DEEPLY CONFIDENTIAL.

As the day waned, with no return of Bess, Larue's moody face took on a cloud which gathered gloom with the approach of night. His mind left the momentous plans of the morrow; he grew distraught, and too absorbed to be either savage or civil, as circumstances would have ordinarly required. So thoroughly were his faculties set upon one thought that he seemed lost to sense. He overlooked some flagrant violations of his ordinances in the presence of moneyless gentry who grouped near the bar and levied blackmail with famishing looks and thirsty insinuations upon the capitalistic customers who dropped in and out as the moments sped. He abstractedly returned the salutations of patrons whom he customarily rated as cordial acquaintances. He strode from the bar to the window time and again, cracking his knuckles, pulling his short mustache, and muttering by turns his choicest oaths. At last he walked to the door, threw it open, leaned against the sash, and with sullen face inspected the street.

It was in the growing gloom, the inglorious sunset of the city. The hours of light were ending; the commercial

day was at a close, and whatever pyrotechnic glory the sun (or Phoebus in his shining car) was passing down the west, his demonstrations in the high-builded heart of the town were no more imposing than the snuffing of a candle. But where nature failed the artifice of men was triumphing. the public gas-lamps kindled their yellow flames; the electric lights flashed forth in dense array along the street level or hung aloft, many in colored globes, from high walls. The converging vista could have been thought set and strung with variant gems.

It was a stern scene thus gaudily lighted. With the end of the day's toil all hands were making from the center of occupation to the remoter quarters of home—the foxes from their forage to their holes, the birds from the fields to their nests, the sons of men from the toil-rooms of day to the shelters of night. Past Larue the movement was south, all south in the crowded streets, with wagons, carts, drays, omnibuses—like the pictured rout of an army with cannon, caisson and baggage—all one way, southward. In equal volume, and as swiftly as on the roadway, the current poured down the walks on either hand. Caught momentarily at crossings by blockading vehicles it paused and gorged in impatient turbulence to rush on again with an acceleration of speed like a river through a bursting dam. Swirling about projecting signs, open cellar doors, kegs, barrels and posts upon the curb, surging even into the gutters, babbling with commingled voices as swelling rivers protest their eager haste to their confining banks, the tide swept on. Laborers, singly or in pairs and platoons, bent of form, rugged of

face, rough of dress, pipe in mouth and bucket in hand, trudged by as though parading national types, for all nations are as one in the great cosmopolis of the new world, bonded fraternally in toil. The men and women of the shops and desks, contrasting the grave and gay, hastened by and on. The factory girls—the young women of manual labor in the crowded packing-rooms and manufactories—flippant and insolent, conquering the day's fatigue in anticipation of the night's pleasures, were shouting greetings, laughing insults, as they passed the opened doorways. Whom else of the lowly in the city did not the tide comprise as it swept under Jack's heedless gaze in this hour of gloaming and gas-light.

The light of day fled measuredly the while until the night was on. The stars came out in the ragged rift of sky above the street and the moon, from somewhere in the low and unseen east, glanced on the chimneys and ill-assorted roofs with its silver sheen. Deep in the street below, where Larue stood and the stream coursed, the pallor of the moonlight and the sombreness of the night were bidden garish defiance. The shop-fronts blazed thriftily, the saloons flashed their treacherous welcome and sent forth invitations in the strains of cracked music, while laughter and song arose. Then a counter-current grew upon the walks. The resorts were finding patronage from both directions, the toilers of the night were issuing to their tasks, and the way was once more reanimated. This strolling, shifting, merry mob, bent on illicit purpose, the gas-light and riotous music, made up the "night side of the Levee."

Two hours had compassed these events and still Larue

stood at his door. He had not once left his post, but merely stepping aside as custom came and went, and repelling all addresses from those who manifested a desire to linger in conversation, he brooded with deepening gloom upon the scene. He was watching and waiting. To watch and wait for an incident or person, the coming of which or whom submits to long delay, is a vexation to the gentlest nature. As "hope deferred maketh the heart sick," so truly is the laggardness of one looked for a sore trial of temper. Larue, whose spirit was on scant acquaintance with any of the graces, was well on to bursting with rage. That his requirements of Bess should bide her wanton pleasure at any time was a blow in his face, an intolerable exhibition of insubordination. Now that he wanted her with urgency his discomfiture was galling. He was in a helpless fume and fret, when a small figure darted out of the crowd in the streets and past him into the saloon. It was the ubiquitious and free-faring Hackles driven to cover by an empty stomach. The arrival of the boy seemed to suggest a recourse to Larue, for his face brightened and he turned within doors. Hackles dashed to a lunch counter and hastily ordered a meal. Jerry translated the order in his own occult speech and tossed up the required viands, upon which Hackles fell ravenously.

As Larue was turning from the door he was accosted from behind by a man who rapidly strode into the saloon and seizing him by the hand dragged him toward the bar, shouting cheerily: "Hi, there, Jack, come have a nip."

The visitor was one of those customarily welcome, so Larue permitted himself to be hauled along.

"A little bitters, please. What's yours' Jack. Same? So be it. I've had a smashing fine time to-day," the man remarked, turning from the bartender to Jack and rattling on about a gay drive on the boulevards, remarking that he had seen Bess driving out and enquiring who her gentleman escort might be.

"I don't know," sternly replied Larue.

"Didn't you know she was out with him?" queried the man with sudden apprehension,

"I did not," was Jack's meaning reply.

"Why, I thought you knew it. Hang me for a fool if I say any more. Fact is, I didn't see her. It was somebody else," and the man laughed in merry anticipation of the domestic row his blundering tongue had put in prospect.

"Gad," he laughed to himself as he swallowed the drink, threw down the price, and unceremoniously rushed out, "if that woman wears a broken nose or a black eye for the rest of the week it's my fault."

"Ha! ha!" (or a sound to that effect) quoth Larue, softly, as his witless informant vanished. He smiled. It was one of those smiles which conquer scruples on the eve of cruel measures and compassionate the victim of one's fell designs. It is called a grim smile. With the man of undemonstrative temper it is the most fearsome evidence of wrath. It is the mask of sentiment, an ugly thing, the humorous countenance of a skeleton belying itself. Woe betide Bess!

Larue strolled down to where Hackles was voraciously feeding himself and engaging the cook in animated discourse.

"I'm goin' to ther show at the opery-house ter night" the boy was saying; "not to ther one at ther 'Lympic,' but ter ther Chicawgo opery-house, and don't you furgit it. I've been to it wunst and it's great, The star scuds around from de fust minit ter ther last—say, an' he's fine. Den dares a feller wid de rummiest old make-up you ever see. He does ther greatest dead-best song-and-dance act I ever seen. He kin rag for'ard an' back, do a paralyzin' wing step, coonjine all over de floor, an' throw a back summerset off'n one foot. Den dere's de scenery—it knocks everything cold. Ther' never wuz a razzle dazzle or flim-flam fake to touch it. W'y de scenes jest change like in a panerамer, and houses fall to pieces and trees go streakin' off inter the air, an' der devil's ter pay every three minits. An' den dere's the Amazonian march—oh, hush, honey; hush, man; yo're too much for me," and the boy laughed ecstatically.

"Well, I wonder w'at's der matter wid you and yer bummy old show," rejoined Jerry, coldly; "I see in der papers dat dere's rats on it."

"Here," interrupted Hackles, "I'll give you a pointer. Don't you count on what no papers say of a show. When a real live play worth viewin' comes to town ther papers all jumps on it and try to chase it out, but the people go all the same. Say, ef you keep tab on the papers, yer'll find 'em dead down on every show you like an' taffyin' up all der shows dat 'u'd give yer sharp pains. An' say, I've got it dead straight from Binnie Travers. He works in a press room an' he sez that dere ain't more dan half w'at's in

de papers dat's true, an' he knows 'cause he's on de inside."

Jerry had not time to respond to this arraignment of the press when Jack ended the whole controversy after his own fashion.

"Tut, tut, tut," he said with the grim smile still at his lips and with an elaborate rest on each "tut" that brought the boy into terrified attention. "There's a woman sick in Milwaukee and she can't sleep for your noise. I want you here at 10 o'clock to-night, and don't you forget to remember it."

Jack swung away with chilly unobservance of the dismay his words had wrought. The afterpiece, consisting of tableau, denouement, and grand finale all at once, with no end of tights and red fire in the performance at the Chicago opera-house that night began at about 10.15. Hackles' face graphically betrayed his complete discomfiture, while Jerry, with a laugh, cut a caper and walked down his narrow inclosure singing sotto voce and in fiendish derision—

"Ting, ting, ting, ting, ting, ting,
Tar, lar, la lar,
How I wish I c'u'd go
To ther oper-a-r."

Boiling with rage and disappointment, knowing that there was no appeal from the decree and being too robust to cry, Hackles slid off the stool with a scowl at the maliciously delighted Jerry and, humping his shoulders, scraped his feet suddenly out of the saloon.

Larue had somewhat abated his vexation, and with a plan of redress in mind was turning quite complaisant when two men entered. He had dismissed his bar attendant for the evening, and, doffing the apron, was presiding behind the counter.

The new callers were rotund, neatly attired and substantial looking men of middle age. They wore large fobs on expansive vests and five-carat single stones in their shirt-fronts. This make-up is legendary and is good enough for our brief uses of them.

"Why, Ald. Considine, I hope I see you," said Jack warmly, addressing the one in the lead, who was Timothy T. Considine, a saloonist further up the street and the representative in the common council of the "Levee" ward.

"Jack, my boy, how are you?" returned the alderman, as he cordially grasped Jack's proffered hand over the bar. "Mr. Larue, I want you to know my friend, Commissioner Mears. A. G. Mears of the County Board."

"Glad to know you, sir, glad to know you," said Jack with sweepng suavity as he transferred his hand to the Commissioner. "Now name your pleasure, or rather let me do it for you. I have a little very old Hennessy I keep in private stock for my friends. I don't sell it at all; there's no price to be put on it."

As he spoke he set out the glasses and fished up from the bottom of a cupboard in the back bar a cobwebbed and dusty bottle. With manifest care that these evidences of age should not be removed he poured out the drinks, apologizing for this breach of tavern ethics by words to that

effect and an allowance so generous that both gentlemen protested a sufficiency before he finished serving. The liquor was the least poisonous of Jack's stock and was pleasant to the vitiated taste of the trio. As Larue cleared away the glasses and brought some cigars, after asserting his hospitable rights to receive no recompense from the alderman, he turned and said to the commissioner in an encouraging tone: "I don't understand how it is we never met before, although you do live in another part of the town. I have often heard of you; I have long known you by reputation."

Considine interposed a coarse laugh. "Reputation is good. I suppose you mean such reputation as our charming friend the editor of the 'Daily Tidings' gives him. And say, by-the-by, if that scribbling fellow doesn't stop his howling about 'the gang,' 'jobbery,' 'boodle,' and the like of that he claims to be both in the council and board, something will happen to him. Why he's screeching about me all the time, what he calls Tim Considine and all sorts of fat city jobs, and I'm helpless. If I was to sue him he'd write lies about my family and if I was to kill him it would take all I've got to get out of it; but I'll tell you what Jack, and that's a good deal the reason we're here to-night; I would give fifty dollars as my part of a purse, which will be four or five times that big, to have some fellow knock the eternal daylights out of him some night as he goes home. What I mean is to crack his jaw and hammer his nose and eyes into one without shoving him clean off the hooks, d'ye see? Now you know lots of big-muscled fellows who'd do well on such a job, eh, old man?"

"That's right," said Mears, as Larue turned inquiringly to him. "I'll chip in fifty dollars and guarantee a pot of at least two hundred dollars. I'd like to see the whelp in his grave, but its too much of a reach to put him there. However, a good old time, six-weeks-in-the-hospital thumping will do."

"And there ain't no law for the fellow that does it," said Considine.

"Well, gentlemen, I'll turn up the very party you want any time between now and the first of next week. Next Monday? All right, I'll have him," said Larue.

"I'll lay back now and wait for the howl and you bet when it comes the money'll be there," said Considine. But now here's another matter just as important. What do you think of capturing the Eighteenth?"

"That would be a good one; it's never been done," observed Larue.

"True for you," rejoined Considine, "but we'll do it this time, and you must pitch in with us.

"Yes, Mr. Larue," added Mears, "you must help us out."

"If it's in my line, but that's a heavy job," said Larue, shaking his head. "That ward is silk-stocking from away back."

"Only by one hundred and twenty-three at the last election," said Considine. "Now Mears has got a brother-in-law over there, Andy Hardy, that we think can beat it."

"What's his business?" asked Larue.

"Same as yours."

"That will knock him out in that ward right on the first off," urged Larue. "His saloon will beat him."

"But he's sold out," promptly interposed Mears.

"Yes," said Considine, "Joe Calkey's name's over the door and has been there now three months."

"Silent partner?" quered Larue.

"The same," said Considine, with a smile. "Joe don't own a cent. He get's a salary for his name, and that's all he wants, and the chance to play boss. Hardy's nominally cleaned out and don't come around. He's going into coal and wood."

"Then that's all right," approved Larue. "Now what kin I do?"

"A small thing; you can give us one hundred brave ballots," said Considine. "I can spare that much off my score and I want you to get them. So you just rustle me up a hundred of the gentlemen on your staff, and we've got sixty days' lodgings for them on the river side of the Eighteenth."

"Oh, I see, as the blind man said, I see clearly," laughed Larue. "I'll haul over the stock and spare a hundred. Write down where the lodgings are on this card."

"That'll fix 'em sure," chuckled Considine, as he wrote; "what with a hundred more lumber shovers and dock-wollopers that can be spared from the seventeenth to move right across the branch. Hardy'll have margin to give away. Won't he, commissioner?"

"I think he'll pull through," laughed Mears. "What tickles me most though, is how the silk-stockings will feel

landed without a guess of it beforehand, if everything works smooth."

"It's more important than that," said Considine; "it'll change the complexion of the ward permanently, and gentlemen, we'll have something ourselves to say from there on the inside of things— eh?"

The three laughed and took another round of drink.

Jack's whiskey on top of what they had taken before and reinforced several times subsequently by some of the same, was oiling the speech of the two public officers and the three men were holding quite a jolly session in which Larue took sober part. At such times even the most discreet men, when with friends, will take little exhilarating flights of indiscretion.

"Fill 'em up again, old man," shouted Considine with a flourish, "and let me tell you on the quiet a good little joke on my friend Mears. Say, this is a good joke, one of those kind of jokes that our little friend, the editor, would give one hundred round dollars for. Well, you have seen Commissioner Eberhart, the crank reformer, who came on the board with a great brag that he was going to knock out the gang and run everything in the interest of economy and reform. Well he's knocked out and the big brain of my brother Mears produced the scheme to do it, although he is modest enough to deny it. Never mind nudging me, commissioner; my friend Larue and I understand each other from away back, and you can trust him without fear. It was done just in this wise, by the simple twist of the wrist,— sort of so. Late one afternoon it was suddenly discovered

that the poor-house was out of butter. Lord what excitement was kicked up, but none could be found. Now, Eberhart, in his commission store, over on South Water Street, had a big invoice of the finest gilt-edge dairy product, and he was shown how necessary it was that the paupers should get butter instantly. He agreed to break the rules just this once and send out his stuff. As soon as it got there everything was fixed for it—the butter was cleaned out of the firkins and a lot of the flimsiest old butterine put in its place. Of course there was considerable surprise when the spurious butter was discovered, but Eberhart was given a chance to fix things and the matter was all hushed up. What's the result? Well, the result is that every time since then that the great reformer gets in board meeting the word 'oleomargarine' is whispered and he shuts up like a clam."

Larue laughed vacuously, in an effort to show some appreciation of an enterprise which he actually considered a poor trick by the side of some of his performances at law-breaking. Mears appeared to be good-naturedly bored and was evidently prepared to get back at Considine, for he spoke up abruptly as the alderman finished.

"Well, that's a horse on me, but since you're telling tales on the board, let me give you one in equal confidence on the council. You remember the Metropolitian street-railway franchise ordinance that went through last month, Well, a certain alderman not a thousand miles from where we stand, as well as a number of others besides, got a cool ten thousand in the Company Bonds. Our alderman didn't

want to keep his, but was willing to let them go at seventy cents spot cash. How does he work it without showing his hand? In the first place the shares were one hundred dollars each, and were issued in blank to Ben McDougal, who, as our little friend the editor says, 'runs the joint machines of Cook County and the city of Chicago.' Ben indorses them all and gives them out. Our alderman takes his one hundred shares and, through a party that does such work, gets them off at seventy cents. The party just marks the purchaser's name over Ben's standing indorsement and the transfer is made. Saving a little commission to the broker, the alderman pockets his earnings, and the only man on top of God's earth who can give positive testimony to show up the trade is Ben McDougal, and he don't dare to. Not for a minute, from beginning to end is the alderman's name used, the company itself don't know exactly how the soap is distributed and the broker, even if he had a mind to, couldn't tell enough to do any harm. Talk about clever people, well, if you want a real cute party, tackle an alderman. The poorest stick in the council can give the best commissioner on the board cards and spades at fine work and then win the game on natural points."

The trio laughed again, and Larue, desiring to be impartial, remarked in the easy vernacular employed by the commissioner, "Well, this looks like a case of horse-and. Both tales are very cunning, and there's no telling who has got the best of it. However, I'm satisfied that whether it's an alderman or a county commissioner, that whenever you meet one or the other you've got a dead wise party to deal with."

Some time thereafter the two officials departed, both being "pretty well corked," as the alderman put it.

The business of the saloon proceeded without incident for a while. Men marched in, drank, paid and marched out in a strange perfunctory way. Now and then a drinker, knowing Larue, would state a few commonplaces, to which he in kind replied, but ordinarily little was said, and often not a word was spoken.

A passer-by upon the street dropped in or a laborer at some neighboring task filched a moment to run over to the saloon. He laid a silver dime upon the counter; Larue set forth a bottle of whiskey and two glasses, one filled with water; the tippler poured out from one to three ounces of the liquor, swallowed it at a gasp, drank the water and went out. Children came in with pails and bottles to be filled,—now a little girl with a ragged shawl over her head, shyly asked that her bucket be filled with beer, and again a dirty-faced small boy presented a bottle with the command, "Give dad another nickel's worth of gin." A good deal of this had passed without variation when the door was softly opened just enough to admit a bloated, bearded face, with eyes that timidly scouted the interior. At sight of Jack the head was withdrawn, but the saloonist had espied it and called out, "Come in Luffy, I want to see you. Bring in the other mark too."

The door slowly re-opened and now Luffy ventured to intrude his entire person, though it was evident that he still had misgivings. He held the door open and behind him crept with tottering steps a man in the most extravagant state of "total wreck." His clothing was a patch of shreds,

yet seemed full as secure as his bodily frame, which threatened to fall apart at every rickety step by which he moved. He was half blind and groped with little timorous whimperings at Luffy's heels.

"Well," ejaculated Larue as he surveyed the wretch, "where did you get that, Luffy?"

"Oh, that's old Fin Poppels," said Luffy with a grin. "He's been under the weather lately."

Old Fin thereat made a shaky bow and mumbled something in acknowledgment of the presentation.

"Well take a drink," said Larue, as he placed a bottle on the bar.

The light of perfect comfort came into Luffy's eyes and he said urgently to his companion, "Come on up, Fin, here's suthin'."

Old Fin's alacrity was comic enough to make Larue laugh, for he propelled his rattle-trap body across the floor with an eager haste that seemed certain to shake him all to pieces. He filled his glass to the brim at which Larue remarked that the invitation was to take a drink and not a bath. The drinks were to both old fellows little less than life-preservers, and old Fin actually wept with relief, for the myriad abscesses through his corroded system were clamoring for their only lotion. His case marks the triumph of homeopathic science, for there was nothing to cure, as it is put by those who know, but "the hair of the dog that bit him."

"Luffy," said Larue, clearing away the glasses, "You're to register this time in the Eighteenth. The Green Tree'll be your hang out, that's the 11th precinct. Get over there now any time and tell O'Byrne I sent you. You can take

ten of the boys there with you, but let me know how many you take. It's good for sixty days, until after election."

Luffy could scarcely measure his joy. He pointed to Old Fin and said, "Here's a good one right here."

"But that old rag-bag won't live till election day," said Larue.

"Oh, yes, he will. He's been that way a long time, ain't you, Fin?" said Luffy.

"A long time," chattered Old Fin, nearly wagging his head off: "I'll live. Oh, I'll live. What is it, Luff, old friend?"

"A most elegant thing," excitedly replied Luffy, shaking Old Fin in a manner that would have finished the work of the palsy if long continued. "It's vote, my boy! Vote in the Eighteenth! Bed and board at the Green Tree. Sixty days of it! Drink, too,—eh, Jack?"

Larue was laughing and said, "Well, yes, some, but we ain't going to swill you."

"Drink, too! D'ye hear that, Finny my lad? Drink!" shouted Luffy, still shaking the old man. "What d'ye think of that?"

Tears were streaming down Old Fin's face and he pothered about the floor ecstatically, repeating the magic words: "Bed—board—drink!" and chuckling and weeping and fretting his hard old hands together. "The saints bless the vote! Sixty days—bed—board—drink."

The Eighteenth was a residence ward for the most of its territory—silk stocking—and had been one of the few from which a saloonist could not go to the common council.

The hour reached 10 o'clock without further event, when Hackles returned.

CHAPTER IX.

UNDER COVER OF NIGHT.

Off in the northwest corner of the South side, in the angle formed by the confluence of the south branch and main body of that foul lagoon, miscalled the Chicago river; off there, where masts and chimneys, roofs and spars, are mingled overhead; where the smell of barreled sugars, cured meats, hides, oakum, tar, and sewage blend in the boquet of commerce; where tunnels, docks and false land give suspicion to the very earth; where the ship-chandler, importer, and wholesale provisioner raise babel all day, it is queer at night. It is black and lonesome. If you stood there any time in the hours between sunset and dawn you could scarcely credit that the scene under daylight was one of the most animated on the face of the earth. It is the very heart of Chicago's tremendous jobbing trade region, but its desertion by night is utter. The crowded buildings wear their shadows like crape, and the black street yawns between them like an abyss; the alleys gape like the mouths of catacombs; the basements, with burst and ill-barred doors, lie deep and mysterious; bales, boxes and barrels are piled convenient to ambuscades of cut-throats and goblins; the walks are worn

and treacherous, and the wind at whatever gauge, plays an eternally hideous sport with everything that hangs loose; your own foot-steps awaken eerie echoes like ghostly challenges, and the swish of the horrible river comes to your ears like the gibbering converse of the suicidal dead within its fecal depths.

The heart of the timid sickens with fear and the nerves of the bold are primed for emergencies in this quarter by night.

But to the mind of a student there would be less of wonder in this gravelike dreariness than in the one small effort that is made to overcome it. This enterprise is conducted in a building which, it is little enough to say, looks dismally out of place here. In the rush of reconstruction that followed the great fire some one built squarely in the middle of the first block south of the river a two-story store and flat, and neither the subsequent advance in values nor the clamor of the trade for this advantageous location has moved the indifferent owner to make the least alteration. There it stands, in cracked and weather-worn red brick, an unsightly depression in the lofty piles of warehouses that flank it and face it and command it from the rear with six and seven story frowns. It is probably natural enough that the store happens to contain a saloon as a convenient buffet by day for the stevedores of the vessels and the truckmen and clerks of the houses, and as the resort for a disreputable miscellany by night. It is no attractive place, save for the fact that the proprietor has set up, on the curb before the door, a large, square, transparent and illuminable sign. Aside from the sparse and feeble street lamps, this sign is the only luminous

oasis in this desert of gloom. It is certainly a most reassuring sight to see, though it be the beacon of a doggery.

Here, at intervals during the night, the rapid roll of wheels and a smart clattter of hoofs herald the night-faring hack or cab. It needs a practiced eye to tell what manner of object is bearing down from a distance with fire-litten eyes. But as it approaches this one proves to be a hack. You can catch the double measure in the duet of flint and steel, with its optical effect, in sparks knocked out of the paving.

Quite as commonplace as is the hack with its all too work-a-day and plebeian name, it dons a weird charm after night. All objects, even the most familiar, the shrubbery on the lawn, the trellis at the side of the house, the gate, the pump, and in-doors too, the half-opened closet-door, the very furniture, your own discarded clothing can be invested with alarms in the dark. But the hack, if you have a mind for it, can affect you in that chill way worse than any of these. Its spectral steeds and tenebrous outline, with its ghostly driver, form a basis upon which is wrought all the criminal tales, involving close-carriages by night, that have conspired to abuse our young intellects. A carriage plunging through a by-street at midnight is the sub-structure of almost any harrowing romance you want, and the cry that issues from this hack, as it swings to the curb and strikes a halt in the full light of the saloon-front, sets the story going.

A *cry* was said, meaning simply an effort of the voice, for what *cry* was ever thrown to the midnight sky in a bravura so sustained!

It was a laugh, a woman's laugh—clear, ringing, hilarious, defiant, drunken.

Even as the driver leaped down the door was kicked open from within, and with a rush and rustle of trim and garish skirts the merrymaker of a moment since bounded to the walk. With almost equal expedition another of similar model emerged, followed by two men, each of slik hat, high collar and light overcoat. With a scrambling haste, which ministered to more merriment and cheated the greedy saloon loungers aroused to inquiry by the uproar, the women darted in at a side-door and bolted up-stairs. The gentlemen tarried with uneasy legs and a vast confusion of accounts to pay the driver, a task which was ultimately performed to the triple profit of the latter. The gentlemen then betook themselves in the wake of the women under a fusilade of maudlin comments from the saloon door.

It was at an hour a little prior to this mere incident of the hack that Hackles returned "from the show." He was well betimes, with a moment or more to spare ere 10 o'clock, but he made no effort to conceal the fact that he felt himself coerced.

He slunk into the saloon and slouched along, disdaining any further notification of his presence for duty than the noise of his shuffling feet.

"A feller what's been a hustlin' all day carryin' up scen'ry fur a ticket and den ain't allowed ter see the afterpiece is playin' in dead hard luck and dat's me," muttered Hackles to himself as he proceeded, and just then Jack took cognizance of him.

"Come here," ordered Larue, sharply.

Hackles looked doubly rebellious and scarcely raised his feet as he granted a reluctant obedience.

"Come here! Do you understand?" and Larue accompanied this peremptory summons with a movement that brought the boy with breath-taking speed.

"What do you mean, you little whelp, by showing your spunk to me? Now drop this foolishness and listen," and he shook the boy vigorously by the shoulder.

"I want you to go and find out where Bess is. I just want you to locate her without speaking to her or letting her see you. When you get her spotted, come back and tell me. Now make lively and don't you come back this time without some report, or—," and he gave the boy a none too gentle start with his boot.

Hackles had been on such errands before and it was with a thoroughly intelligent purpose that he instituted the search.

The paths he traced and the resorts he visited in the likelihood of finding Bess are unworthy of our pursuit. He looked through several concert saloons in the blazing heart of the town; he made diligent inquiry at the doors of the two convenient variety theatres, and attended a number of even less creditable resorts. It was in the midst of protracted failure that, at this point, he bethought him of the house of the luminous sign.

Reaching the house the boy evaded the attention of the men in the saloon, and stealing in at the unlatched side-door ascended the stairs. A gaselier with crystal pendants and

a Japanese shade burned dimly at the head of the flight and shed a mellow, tinted light through the upper corridor. The furnishing of this hallway was so sharply contrasted to the exterior of the building and the general cast of the quarter as to arrest the intruder with astonishment. Deeply carpeted in crimson velvet, walled and ceiled in gilt and cream Lincrusta of heavy relief, with doorways, curtained in blue and old-gold plushes, hall furniture of rosewood paneled with repousse brass, the prospect presented a riot of elegance to Hackles as, after noiselessly crawling up the stairs, he peered cautiously over the top step. It was totally without impression from his surroundings that he reconnoitred before further progress. This was not his first visit hither or to other quarters of equally guilty magnificence. His attention rested upon a sound of festivity that reached him through one of the several doors in advance. There was light song, laughter, high-worded discourse, and the clink of glass well blended. Hackles strainedly bent himself to dissect this confusion. He sought to single out and identify one voice. For full five minutes he crouched, hearkening. At last, with a nod of satisfaction, he boldly arose and advanced. He approached the door through which the festal sound issued and rapped sharply. Sudden silence ensued within and the door was opened by a negro in a jacket and apron.

"I want to see Miss Bess," said Hackles, loudly, as the rather astonished servant was hastening to close the door.

"Here I am, Harry, my boy," Bess answered, as she rose and came forward to the door. She was flushed with wine

and walked unsteadily, her bonnet lurched toppingly, and her handsome features (in the best repair that night) were distorted by a good-humored leer.

"Say, Bess," said Hackles, quickly, as she appeared, "Jack is terribly worked up about you to-night an' I'm sent out to spot you. You've got to go home, Bess. It's bad enough now; if yer stay out any longer Jack'll kill you—it's dead true, Bess, he'll murder you. I'm takin' steep chances ter tell yer, Bess, 'cause I was told not to let yer know, but I've got to tell him where yer are ef yer don't come. Come on now, Bess. I'll fetch a cab for yer."

Bess had listened with a tipsy chuckle to each sentence, and as he finished laughed hilariously. Slapping the boy lightly on the cheek and shoving him from her, as she backed into the room, she said with a great show of humor:

"Tell Jack I say for him to go to the devil or go to bed, that I'm all right, and I'll be home later on."

The door closed on the boy struggling to make another plea, and the prompt resumption of festivities within impressed him that further effort was useless.

It was with such sympathy for Bess and apprehension of the penalties awaiting her as would have awakened a more refined nature to sighs, perhaps to tears, that Hackles sought the street. His feelings, however, found ample and heartfelt expression in boding shakes of the head and repeated imprecations, less upon her or upon Jack than upon the facts and prospects of the situation itself.

Jack challenged him for a report the instant he stepped

into the saloon. Hackles made a brief, surly statement of the truth.

The saloonist asked no more, nor did his face betray a sentiment which the news might have aroused. Hackles turned again into the street, and Larue, throwing his head back, whistled softly a tuneless strain, drumming an accompanying tattoo with his fingers upon the bar.

In that expressionless attitude he was revolving plans of punishment, measures of revenge upon the woman who shared his life and had given him this day and night's affront. His dallying hands were at her throat, his placid eyes drank in the terror and agony of her face, his heedless ears were ringing with the echoes of her shrieks, his unruffled pulse beat time to the exultation that thrilled him at her tortures. Should he kill her—aye, curse her, yes—but no—and why not kill? Murder is irremediable and full of consequences. He had further purpose of her beside, but he would punish her and hurt—, oh, truly and severely—but how? The meeting and the moment must suggest. Such sweet unction were these meditations to his barbaric heart, so trained and used to brutal exercises were his senses, that he whistled and drummed.

His bartender presently returned, and, doffing the apron, Larue yielded the place behind the bar.

"Close up without me," he said, by way of instruction to the man. He then deliberately fitted his cuffs, put on his coat and hat and swallowing a glassful of liquor, walked nonchalantly out. At the corner he called a cab. By his direction the cab sped through the lighted and ever-wakeful

heart of town, described a few sharp turns, and forged into the shadowy angle of the river. Glinting through the gloom, dispelling the silence, the vehicle rattled on until in the glare of the square, illumined sign it drew rein. Larue stepped out, bidding the driver remain, and entering the side-door, ascended the stairs. He, too, caught the noise of revelry and with little delay sat upon the right door. His knock brought the negro, now evidently indignant at the repeated and unceremonious intrusions. His feelings were little mended when Larue struck his hand from the knob and, throwing the door wide open, pushed in with the air of a master. About a table in a group of four, with two young gentlemen and another woman, Bess sat, sharing the speechless surprise which fell upon the board. As she recognized Larue she started with a slight cry. Her features rallied from their leer into an expression of fright; the flush of wine fled from her cheeks, and her drunken bravado, which she had freely commissioned Hackles to report, took incontinent flight in Jack's presence.

He waved his hand toward the door, saying merely, "Come!"

She arose unhesitatingly and advanced.

"Well, I guess not," exclaimed one of the young men, with a bluff show of tipsy courage, as he vainly endeavored to get out of his seat. "No man is going to walk off with our company in that shape."

Bess raised her hand in a gesture to convey the folly of resistance and her perfect willingness to be torn away, so that the young man collapsed in amaze.

Larue preceded her to the top of the stairs, and as she reached him he seized her by the arm, saying again and in a calm voice: "Come on."

"O Jack, Jack," she sobbed, in a yielding tremor of dread.

He made no reply, but assisted her staggering feet down the stairs and into the cab, where she fell back weeping convulsively.

Larue paused for some explicit instructions to the cabman, and then took his place at her side. The rapid ride was passed in silence between them and terminated, with many a jolt and heave of the springs, in the alley at the back door of Larue's saloon and lodgings. He aided her to alight and led her by the hand as he struck matches in advance to facilitate their ascent of the rickety stairs. Once within their room, Bess flung herself, with a burst of tears, into a chair. Larue leisurely lighted the lamp, removed his coat, and turned to her.

In groveling terror the woman threw herself upon the floor, cringed and chattered and begged for mercy.

"We'll make no more talk of this; I'll hear your lies no more," he said. "Come here."

He stooped, tore away her grasp, and, raising her bodily shoved her with crushing violence against the wall.

She screamed and he grasped her jaw, sinking his fingers deep into her throat and cheek. She choked and frothed, clamored inarticulately and tore at his hand.

"Come here, I say," and he jerked her forward till in the crush of lips, tongue and teeth, the blood broke from her

mouth, and dripped upon his wrist. "I'll fix you so you'll stay at home for a few days, anyway till I'm through with this job. Watch me! Your eyes are big enough just now to see and catch how it is done."

Then bending back her head till it seemed that the tendons of her jaw would snap under the strain, he struck her with deliberate purpose and calculation fairly in the right eye. At the moment he launched her from him and with a swooning sob she fell against the wall and dropped to the floor. As her body stretched pronely out her head rested still against the wall and pressed her chin sharply upon her breast, while the bonnet, still clinging with pins and ribbons to her tumbled hair, fell over her face. With a laugh at the evident discomfort of this posture Larue stooped and, seizing her ankle, pulled her toward him till her head slipped down the wall and dropped face upward upon the floor. Straightening himself he regarded her complacently a moment and then went down-stairs.

The saloon had been closed for some time and was in heavy gloom. A light burned dimly over the bar as the police require, and even as he advanced Jack perceived an officer at the front shading his eyes against the glass and peering intently within. He dropped down out of possible sight until the reconnoissance had passed and then stole cautiously to the bar, behind which he crouched. Not daring to arise and expose himself to view from the street he resorted to the cobwebbed bottle in the low cupboard and drank long and gratefully. In the same covert manner he made his return through the uncertain shadows to the rear door and regained his room.

Bess lay as he had left her, breathing heavily in the stupor of drink and sodden pain. He pushed her bonnet and hair from her face. It was with great satisfaction that he observed the pouting crest of blue that was gathering under her eye.

"She'll have to nurse that eye close at home for awhile, I reckon," he chuckled softly.

He then gave her no further attention, but undressed and lowering the light turned into bed.

His snore shortly chimed with the stertorous breathing of the woman, who, still laced in the wreck of her fine dress, disfigured, fevered and drunken, tossed and rolled painfully upon the floor as the night passed and the light came.

And so the day which awakens the world, but sends "the Levee" to bed, found them, and it was raining. It rained, not heavily, for if one looks for an aptitude of sentiment in the state of nature on that morning the elements should have raged in thunder gusts, but as it was to be a long rain, as the facts of this chronicle demand, it was slow and steady. The wind sighed soft and sadly, if you will it, the drops coursed troopingly down the window panes like tears stream down the face of sorrow, and the water dripped from the reeking eaves and sills into the puddled alley below with a sound akin, in fancy, to sobbing.

CHAPTER X.

THE LIMIT OF PATIENCE.

If the genteel interest of Rupert Square was aroused by the re-establishment of No. 50, the inhabitants had been but little enlightened during the first few weeks of its occupancy. Evidence of life and good living within was obtained in the frequent delivery of staple provisions, "delicacies of the season," cases of wine, potted plants, large and finely framed pictures, and sundry objects of equally prosperous character. Numerous embellishments brought thither groups of workmen, and passing glances through the open casements were reputed to disclose magnificent fittings. But the occupants themselves, in whom interest must center, were so far less observable that they stood for speculative subjects at all meetings of the cultured social circle, or semi-circle rather, which the square comprised. There were two servants certainly. Thomas and Eliza betrayed so much, as their duties from time to time took them into the area or upon the street. There was one gentleman, the obvious proprietor, a fact which Mr. Jarvis in person revealed. He occasionally drove out in a hired carriage and had often been met on these solitary excursions by the square's folks

as they, too, resorted to the boulevards and esplanades along the lake. Of evenings it was his wont to stroll the park and pace the arc of the square smoking and meditating. He invited no address and passed unheeded the tentative courtesies of the gentleman.

An incident on this point occurred a day or two since. A young man who had on the board of trade acquired a democratic indifference to the gentle custom of presentation, and who had determined that his mother and sisters had descanted sufficiently upon the strange gentleman, accosted Mr. Jarvis at the park fountain one evening and, halting in friendly fashion, ventured, with a sweeping gesture: "This is a charming resort."

"Quite so," replied Mr. Jarvis, softly.

"The weather is growing warmer and the heated term will soon be upon us," furthered the young gentlemen.

"Doubtless," returned Mr. Jarvis gently and stirring a step as though to move on.

"Ah, pardon me," spoke up the young man with a brisk show of good purpose. "I believe you have recently become a resident of the square. We have quite a little colony here, all mutually acquainted, with the possible exception of yourself. Will you permit me to introduce myself and obtain a reciprocal favor on your part?"

"When your acquaintance is desired, sir, I shall make no hesitancy of soliciting it, sir."

The young man stood in angry astonishment, debating with himself for a moment the propriety of a replicative insult or an assault, but finally yielded his emotions to the

consciousness of his disadvantage. Returning home he related his adventure, which was greeted with a sympathetic laugh from his friends.

Thus No. 50 flourished mysteriously and Mr. Jarvis thrived unmolested during the passing days and weeks. He sauntered on the walk its full length and back again, apparently oblivious of surrounding life. Of evenings the family groups upon their stoops would cease their contemplation of the emerging stars and darkling park, or check their laughter and chat as he approached and passed. Then, as he proceeded, the unfailing theme was the peculiar gentleman of iron-gray years and sombre attire who occupied No. 50. Truly, Mr. Jarvis had wrought the phenomenon of arousing the chaste emotions of Rupert Square to positive—who says vulgar?—curiosity.

No rumor of the Jarvis household's police adventure, caused by Thomas, had gotten abroad, but the very next day, during the afternoon following the trial, Eliza indirectly precipitated a positive scandal which gained vast notoriety through the square, and as the details were never learned Mr. Jarvis and his home were in consequence promoted considerably in mystic importance.

About 3 o'clock in the afternoon of that day, a police officer, helmeted, belted, bloused and clubbed, and accompanied by a young creature of kitchen-girl aspect, was seen to enter the front door of the Jarvis' residence. When it was said "was seen" it is not intended to mean that the square was out *en masse* to witness the event. It required, for example, but one house-maid to observe this extra-

ordinary spectacle to speed the news over the area walls into each kitchen and thence with greater or less dispatch to each living room. Imagine the sensation in your own refined quarter. Many an equally well-balanced neighborhood would have lurched under the strain, and a common locality would have bristled at its windows. In Rupert Square, however, the sensation was limited to a general detail of the servants to discover and report further developments. In consequence each basement beneath the stoop, from No. 49 to No. 1, presently had its domestic scouts picketed.

When the officer had reached the door he sprung the bell vigorously. Eliza, from the kitchen depths, answered in haste, but fell back in affright as she disclosed the visitors.

"Is Miss Eliza Doe, right name unknown, in?" inquired the officer, boldly entering with the girl at his heels.

"There she is," contemptuously cried the latter, pointing at the trembling housekeeper, "there's the thing that won't give me my pay. I guess the two old men who hang out with her are hiding somewhere."

"Never mind; keep quiet," said the policeman, addressing his excited companion. "I've got a warrant for you, Miss Eliza whatever your name may happen to be."

It enters properly to remark here that in drafting warrants for offenders of unknown name the police have a felicitous and convenient custom of terming the males, John Doe and Richard Roe, and the females, Mary Doe and Jane Roe, or combining portions thereof with such fragments of the actual name as they may have obtained. The custom is

not peculiar to Chicago, but is common, as are many other phrases of professional cant, throughout the police of the United States. In this case the complainant evidently knew only the housekeeper's Christian name.

"For what?" gasped Eliza at this astounding announcement.

"For larceny," was the curt reply.

"Yes, for stealing my dress," half shrieked the young woman. "I got this warrant. I am having you arrested. You can't rob me and keep my wages. I want the six dollars you owe me and my dress. Oh, I'll get them out of you. Bundle up in a hurry and come along to jail, where, I don't doubt at all, you have been before."

The angry creature might have continued this tirade indefinitely had not the officer shaken her vigorously by the shoulder and admonished her to "shut up."

Eliza had leaned against the wall and with her hands over her face was sobbing hysterically.

"Can you come along now? The station ain't far and you can, of course, get bail right off," said the officer rather deferentially,

"Why, I don't know what this means. I paid the girl in full and I haven't her dress. Oh, it's some awful plot, Mr. Officer, some awful plot," wept Eliza.

"Then of course it'll come out all right in the morning. Nerve yourself and fix up and come along now," replied the officer in a genuine kindly tone, at the same time suppressing the girl, who seemed threatened with another outbreak. "Maybe, good woman, there's some one at home that you'd

like to tell about this and who'd fix up your bail at the station?"

Eliza wrung her hands in mental torture, and as though consenting with herself upon some repugnant resort, said, softly: "Yes, Mr. Jarvis, the master is at home. I will see him." She started up-stairs, at which the termagantish young person broke into furious remonstrance.

"Don't let her go. She'll get away. She'll hide my dress. She'll burn it up. Stop her, I say, or she'll get the best of us."

The officer seemed less apprehensive for he turned on the girl and shoved her into the corner by the door with such a squeeze of her arm that she cried out with pain and then lapsed into suffering silence.

Mr. Jarvis had meanwhile been aroused by the noise in the hallway as he sat in his study adjoining his bedroom—the second floor front—and had at last set forth to investigate the cause of disorder. He reached the head of the stairs just as Eliza finished her labored ascent.

"What is the matter?" he demanded of her.

The poor woman could not reply, but fell at his feet with a resumption of sobbing in double force.

"Well, well, this is strange," remarked Mr. Jarvis as he stepped past Eliza and stooping, glanced down the stairs into the hallway. The simple disclosure—the officer and the girl—had an electric effect upon him. With an ejaculation of rage he ran back into the room, secured his heavy cane, and dashed down the stairs. As the officer observed the impending onslaught he made a nervous start toward

the door, then shifting his purpose he faced about, unslung his club, and stood his ground. Mr. Jarvis' dressing-gown fluttered far in the rear as with an athletic bound he cleared the bottom steps and poised over the policeman with uplifted cane.

"No violence, sir, I warn you. It will be the worse for you. I didn't come for you, sir. Be calm, I advise you, sir," and the voice of the officer, who was more uncertain of his duty than frightened, trembled perceptibly, but he moved his fighting arm into striking range and threw his left upward and bent over his head.

"Then what *do* you want, you dog? Am I to be eternally annoyed by you whelps? Speak quickly or I'll brain you."

"This girl here has a warrant out for your wife—or maybe some one else—called Eliza," the officer hastened to say.

"Who is this girl, then?" shouted Mr. Jarvis, turning fiercely upon her.

"You ought to know," scornfully replied she, and with folded arms and sneering countenance she turned from the "striking" tableau to Mr. Jarvis in person.

"But I don't know," thundered Mr. Jarvis exasperatedly, "and tell me quick or I'll grind you both to powder."

The atom of time required to fetch Mr. Jarvis a satisfying reply can be filled with a brief statement of what she was. Her name was Mary Mack, a domestic whom Eliza had obtained three weeks before after laborous dealings with one of those unscrupulous concerns known as an employment bureau. The girl was worthless and a thief. Eliza had

tolerated her until the day previous, when she released her, allowing her full pay, but abstracting from her luggage a few articles, the property of Mr. Jarvis. The foiled and disappointed drab sought immediate revenge by telling the police judge a long and pitiful story of the outrages she suffered and her pecuniary loss and thereby secured a warrant. She acted upon the hypothesis that almost any claim would be granted before permitting the complaint to reach a hearing. This, gentlefolk, is blackmail, and one of the most frequently practiced phases of that crime. The stake played for is usually small, the pretenses plausible, and the reactional dangers, for these reasons, few. The effrontery and steel-like nerve of these criminal women are almost freaks of nature.

"I am Mary Mack, who was a maid here and who was robbed by that woman; that's who I am."

"Eliza, did you have this woman employed here?" asked Mr. Jarvis.

"Yes," replied the housekeeper, still weeping.

"Are any of her belongings left here and do you owe her anything?"

"No sir."

"You see, sir, that this girl holds no claim upon me or my housekeeper, so that further proceedings are unwarranted," delivering which with much dignity Mr. Jarvis opened the door.

"But, sir," protested the officer, "that's for the judge to say. My first instructions are never to pass upon the evidence of any case. I've got a warrant to serve upon this woman and must serve it."

"You will leave this house at once," replied Mr. Jarvis, swelling into a dangerous attitude.

"But be reasonable—"

"Leave this house; go!" and Mr. Jarvis raised his cane and bespoke in every muscle a determination to parley no more.

Here was an ordeal of no easy gauge for the officer. Professional pride and personal resentment inspired him to serve his writ and take the respondent if the task demanded the peril of his life. Discretion on the other hand thrust upon him an instant score of considerations why he should not in such a case leap to extremes.

"It's a serious thing, sir, to resist an officer, and you may be made to feel it plainer than you'll like after I see my lieutenant. I'm not certain of myself on a few points in this case or it's little I'd stop on the head of your threats or your cane, sir. Be sure I'll come back presently with a clear understanding of my duty and it'll be the worse for you then, sir, if you interfere," and so saying the officer withdrew, leading the now rather frightened girl with him.

Mr. Jarvis' passion seemed to have swollen within him at this speech for it was with a livid face and choking utterance that he retorted: "I advise you upon your own well-being to come no more. I have ever lived within the bounds of the law and the annoyance I have recently suffered from the police must never be repeated. I swear before Almighty God to kill the next cursed policeman who steps within my doors."

The amiable Miss Mack, with her fiery temper quenched

and brazen pretensions overturned, was quite terrified at Mr. Jarvis' intense choler, and as she dragged the officer precipitately down the stoop, she announced her purpose to forthwith non-suit the case, a resolution which the embarrassed patrolman warmly applauded.

But gracious me, what scandal! The outposts and pickets of good breeding were driven in, the camp of culture was taken by storm, and gossip stalked like a vandal victor through Rupert Square. The fifty families sat in caucus at dinner that evening—dinner mind you, for while elsewhere about town it may be tea or supper, it is dinner in Rupert Square, from No. 1 to 49 inclusive, and likely enough in 50—6 o'clock dinner! Gracious, how some people can stickle for titles and "partake" of their chaste comestibles, while others are content to devour, under any name, what the larder affords. But that comes of the variety of life and has nothing to do with Mrs. Tierce's state of mind. Not that I want to say, cherished reader, that you and I and all of us who are not already there could not acquit ourselves in the first estate. Some day, I promise you, when those ships, now faintly seen standing in through the dim, purple haze of the good time coming, reach port, we will have our dinners at whatever o'clock we please, and be as particular about what we call our victuals as the best of them.

Mrs. Tierce was the occupant of 49, and the state of her sensitive mind can, as the ancient and accepted saying has it, be better conceived than defined. Relict of Ezra K. Tierce, senior of Tierce, Case, Caddy & Co., the pioneer pork-

packers and original manufacturers of oleomargarine and other "dairy" products, Mrs. Tierce was rich—don't doubt it—refined withal (like her late spouse's oils) and pompous, to say it where she can't overhear—and could have been primely cast for the dowager duchess were we dealing much in fine folks. She heard with unfeigned astonishment and swelling indignation the story of the Jarvis' episode as related with countless "La, ma'am's" and "It's awful, ma'am's" by her maid. It will be observed that Mrs. Tierce does not fail of the dignity of her station and that she duly has her maid.

"Well, I never!" she ejaculated in her deep, rich voice, at the end of the narration. "But that's what I might have known would come of it. When I contributed $15,000 for my share of Rupert Square, both Mr. Banks and Mr. Teller promised neighbors of equal standing. Now look at it. Mr. Butler moves out in less than four years and some questionable person, dead to common courtesies and with the brutal name of Jarvis, moves in to breed a scandal. I'll not submit to it. I'll complain at once, to-morrow morning, early. Constance (to the maid), tell John to inform James to have the wagonette and bays at the door at 10 to-morrow morning. (And aside.) I'll make Mr. Banks account for this matter."

While Mrs. Tierce thus practically seized the situation, Mrs. Gauge next door, the Misses Detrop beyond, and the remaining mesdames and misses to No. 1, inclusive, were indulging in delicate starts of dismay as they in turn heard the news, and straightway resolving, with that true spirit of

feminine dependence, to submit the whole vexed and insoluble problem to the male factors of the household. For this reason it may be imagined that when dinner presented the opportunity an unusual animation of discourse prevailed that evening over the tables of Rupert Square.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DAWN OF A CRITICAL DAY.

DESCEND, ye pitying rains! Mark with your tears nature's aggrieved estate. Sigh as ye may, ye compassionating winds. Let the united elements stir to sentiments of deep commiseration, since, unseen of feeling creatures, men have, under cover of the night, wrought work so foul. What deeds of the devil, through his human avatar in this broad land does the dawn each day disclose! Nocturnal beasts that fill the shrieking jungle leave for the day less hideous evidences of rapacity than the sun at each rising discloses in a great Christian city. This, then, being as it may be, truly so, look for none worse than "the Levee" reveals, and exceed not the narrow province of our story to find enough.

All hours to the blind are as one. To the sightless eyes there are no serene heavens, no clouded skies, no dawn, no eventide, no noon, no midnight, but an obscurity forever too profound for the scope and definition of light and night. So to the abandoned heart there is neither pang nor quickening, no thorn can wound, no balm allay; its pulse of conscience is as insensible as the empty orbit of the eye.

It was thus that with neither approval nor regret Jack arose to survey his work of the foregoing night.

At his due time, the forenoon being then half spent, he awoke, and as was his wont started from deep sleep into full and alert consciousness. He glanced to where Bess had lain, and seeing her still there was satisfied. Presently he arose and walked to her and stirred her sharply with his bare foot. She groaned. He was in every respect satisfied. He glanced at her face; it was shocking. Her lips were black, hard and drawn so as to bare her set teeth. Tears, perspiration, and saliva had reduced the paint upon her face to a ghastly smear, in which meshes of her hair were glued. Her right eye was swollen until the aspect of an eye was lost. It was tightly shut, black, and slightly cut so that a thin stream of blood had coursed over her temple and into her ear, where it had coagulated and dried. There was a jewel hooked to the ear.

The faintest smile quivered on Jack's hard countenance. It was bidden there by neither ghoulish glee nor an appreciative sense of the grim contrast of the blood and the gem. It was a mere fleeting touch of professional pride. Flies swarmed over her face. He proceeded to dress himself without heeding them or protecting her. It was perhaps his sole virtue, offered as no redeeming trait, that he was neat and precise in his habiliments. He was coarsely dandified and attention has been called to the fact that he dressed well up to the ideal of his class. Proceeding to wash his face and hands he discovered that the pitcher was empty. Conceiving properly that Bess had consumed the

water in preparing for her intemperate sortie of the day before, he scowled upon her as he strode to the door and called below for the cook. That worthy responded with alacrity and appeared at the door below.

"Fetch me up some water," commanded Larue.

"Jumpin' Jerusalem! I'm right in the midst of a fritterin' half counts; but, say, I'll send up Hackles. Just set the pitcher down at the head of the stairs and he'll be up for it in a holy minute. An' say, shall I put your cut on the fire? All right, everything'll be done quicker'n a wink."

So saying Jerry rushed back to the frying of his half-dozen oysters and commissioned Hackles to fill the pitcher.

For once the boy was pleased with the task, for it promised the opportunity of ascertaining Bess' fate, which was direful enough, as his judgment and the noise he had overheard upon her return warranted him in believing. In creditably brief time he rapped, with the brimming pitcher, at Larue's door. Jack opened the door a few inches and reached forth one arm, but Hackles, nerved to such desperate boldness, feigned to stumble, and in delivering the pitcher pushed himself half through the door and saw Bess. It was worse than he had anticipated. To him she seemed dead, and bracing himself in the doorway he pleaded hurriedly: "Oh, Jack, what's the matter with Bess. Let me get a doctor. Oh, is she dead."

He was unable to say more, for Larue dropped the pitcher, flung open the door, and rushed upon him. Hackles deftly eluded his dangerous guardian and fled down the stairs, to stop at the bottom and plead again.

"You open your cursed head again and I'll wring your neck," Jack fairly hissed, and pointing to the saloon said, controlling his wrathful tones, "Go in there and wait till I come down. I'll have use of you."

When he did come down a short time thereafter he called Hackles to him and, giving him a cruel pinch on the shoulder as so much on the score of his late temerity, ordered him to go and ask 'Mandy Thomas to call on Bess at once. Through the back way Hackles hurried, across the alley and down toward the end of the block, where, in the tumble-down rear sheds of a large tenement, dwelt the object of his summons.

Amanda Thomas was a quasi-pious old negress of the most generous propensities, who discharged motherly offices for the all-too-motherless unfortunate girls and women of both races that populated the quarter, who harbored and nursed the wounded thief, who contributed to the tissues of alibis, and who, to all of her wide acquaintance was a ministrix in sorrow or sickness. It may be credited that Hackles presented the urgency of the present requisition and was back-tracking in a minute, with the good, old black putting out her best gait at his heels. It is needless to chronicle with what elevation of the hands and expressions of amazement and pity 'Mandy beheld Bess, nor with what accurate speed she re-invested the bed with clean linen, changed the binding garments of the stricken woman for cool, white wear, bundled her under the cover, bound up her disordered hair, cleansed her face, and sponged her palms with cold water until with many a sigh

and quivering muscle Bess opened her one effective eye and was conscious.

"God love us," cried the old woman, as she witnessed the returning light of mind and encouraged it with gentle laving of the hot temples. "My pretty Bessie, my poor, poor chile, do you know yer aunt 'Mandy? Yes, yes, ye does. C'o'se ye does. I knowed so. Nem' mind, deary love, we's all right. An' dere's dat little, rattlin', ricklin' Hackles, bes' boy ever lived, back dis minnit wid de meat an' de med'sin."

And sure enough, on the instant the boy bounded in, purveyed with the homely medicaments 'Mandy had dispatched him to procure. Pre-eminent among these simple supplies was a small piece of raw meat which 'Mandy with deft hands bound over Bess' tumified eye. The good old soul then seizing the other parcels ran down-stairs to secure from Jerry the hot water wherewithal to brew some hellebore tea. While she was engaged at this task behind the lunch-counter, Larue approached and inquired in a business-like way: "Well, how is she?"

"'Pears ter me dat you might go up an see fer yourself," replied the woman, turning a cold, accusing look on the man.

"Humph!" was Jack's expressionless return, as he rolled his cigar over his tongue, blew out an explosive cloud of smoke, and strode away.

All this was in somewhat distasteful deference to Aunt 'Mandy, whom he prized for her services and feared for the damaging knowledge she possessed. She was to him a

rather disagreeable but none the less necessary commodity and it was none of his purpose to give her offense.

Upon the corner of the counter, over which he leaned, Larue had left two silver dollars, and these, with a chuckle and a grimace turned upon his retreating figure, Aunt 'Mandy seized as she passed out with the hot water. She paused at the foot of the stairs, rested the pail upon a step, and knotted the dollars into a fold of her dress, chuckling the while and lamenting in many wags of the head and inarticulate mutterings the wickedness of the world in general and her own weakness in so profiting by it.

Once more above stairs you never could have suspected that this simple, devoted, and good old creature, bustling about brewing a tea and comforting the sick woman with numerous restful arrangements of the bed clothes and pillows and uttering the happiest words of sympathy and cheer, had any shrewd notions of all that was bad in the situation. Judging by the color of the water and its bitter taste, sampling it with her finger tip, 'Mandy pronounced her tea ready and with little persuasion induced Bess to swallow a liberal quantity of it. Whatever the sovereign virtues Aunt 'Mandy attributed to her favorite panacea, it was at all events a wholesome febrifuge and the sick woman was to profit by it.

Hackles, who had been out, came into the room presently and approached the bed.

"Look out, boy, don't 'sturb my chile," said 'Mandy, warningly.

"I won't desturb yer, will I Bess?" the boy appealed coaxingly.

Bess shook her head with just a ghost of a smile and extended her hand.

Hackles caught it in a grimy grasp, fumbled the white fingers a moment, endeavored to say something, and broke down in an outburst of juvenile grief, with loud boo-hoo's, strangling sobs, and a torrent of tears. Bess now smiled pronouncedly, pressed the boy's hand warmly, and beamed upon him as kindly as she might with her one serviceable eye. Aunt 'Mandy, aghast, ran forward and thrust Hackles away.

"Heavings and yarth! w'at carryin's on! W'y, you cry-baby, you'll make my pretty Bess think she's done mos' ready ter die, w'en she ain't really sick a little bit. Now run along and don' make no mo' sech 'stravagant fusses," and so saying Aunt 'Mandy hustled Hackles out at the door.

Wailing, snarling, sniffling, gnashing his teeth, and swearing with the full volume of his profane vocabulary, clenching his fists and striking the wall, Hackles lingered on the stairs until the paroxysm passed, and then, with lowering countenance, he went out through the saloon. He looked so ugly as he passed, that Jack, cognizant of the boy's alignment with Bess as against himself, tossed him a quarter as a peace-offering. Hackles caught the coin with no show of conciliation, but such is the "elasticity of youth," even among the offspring of poverty, neglect and crime, that a half-hour later the boy was in the animated lead of a party

of his kind bound for the docks to steal the clothing and dinners of the workmen.

Observing after a little time that her patient was falling into a promising slumber 'Mandy ventured to go home.

Her husband had returned during her absence and was at that moment in the little fence-corner which did service for back-yard, slaking some lime in a bucket, as is the process for making whitewash.

Uncle Rube, 'Mandy's "ole man," was a woolly-pated, kinky-bearded, frosted, and ebony-skinned *old* man for a fact. He was no more like the dapper and rather greasy, black gentleman into which the northern negro has degenerated than was the toga-wearing Roman of ancient time like the bejeweled and motley-arrayed Italian of to-day, or the Arcadian Greek like the curled and kilted Armenian. If there was anything that Rube contemned it was this very "dandy dark" and "flying-coon" condition into which he beheld his race sinking through the enervating influence of hotel service and the barber-shops. With his big, queer pantaloons pulled up as high as his shoulder-blades behind by his one leather suspender, his long black coat, cotton shirt, old felt hat and brass-rimmed spectacles, Rube was the living "Essence of Old Virginny" as he shuffled along the street. He had moved into town in the baby days of Chicago and had suffered his share of the big fire, so that every native, rest assured, knew him and was glad to greet him.

"How d'ye do, Uncle Rube," the little children would cry, darting under his nose to claim attention.

Business men would nod and say : "How are you Uncle Rube?"

Store-boys, butcher-boys, hucksters' boys would seize him by the hand and shout with a great laugh, "How is yo' bones, ole man?" in good natured imitation of him.

Even the tough would tap his hat with his stick and condescend to say : "Hey, Rube."

One man alone would give no recognition to Rube's salutation, though they were well acquainted. This man would pursue with his cold eye the old negro's passing figure and mutter, "Damned thief, old fence, I hope I may put the kibosh on you yet." As a kibosh is a handcuff, it may be surmised that this was no friendly fellow. Nor was he. He was an officer in plain clothes—no officer in particular, but any one on the force, as all knew Rube in lights the world dreamed not of, and, to do the old man justice, suspected him of more than he was guilty, while they allowed him great gifts of cunning.

Rube was thoroughly an odd-job man, and this being the renovating May-tide he had all the whitewashing, carpet-beating you could reasonably expect a stiffened old man to take care of. These were his harvest days, however, and he had the prospect of the long summer rest before him until winter should make it possible again to peddle Aunt 'Mandy's pies and chicken sandwiches around the night resorts down-town.

"W'y 'Mandy, ben out?" queried Rube, looking up as his spouse came in through the ramshackle gate.

"Yep. Larue's beaten his woman ag'in. Done her awful dis time, but she'll pull thro'."

"To' bad, to' bad," sighed Rube. "Bess is to' likely a lookin' woman to hab to stan' it, but she ain't got no kind of caution, no kind of caution. Say, 'Mandy, I met Jimmy Tracer around on de avenoo a bit ago an' he stopped me an' axed kinder peart-like who did de Finkelstein job, an' w'at's gone wid de stuff. I tole him I knowed nothin' about no Finkelstein job, nor no stuff. No more does I, ez you know. Et's de fust I heerd of de ole pawn man's bad luck."

'Mandy laughed in a wise way and said as she went into the house, "Ye jes tell dese fly coppers when dey bodder you to go 'long 'bout deir bizniss."

After awhile Rube took his bucket and other accoutrements and left for the day. Later a young man came up through the alley and entered by the gate to the Thomas abode. He was a hard-visaged, depraved looking young man. He pushed open the door and seeing 'Mandy within called out, "Hi, there, Aunty!"

"Come in, Scully," she replied, recognizing him.

"How's Larry? If I can see him I'll come in," said he.

Aunt 'Mandy glanced into the one other room of her small suite and coming forth said, "Yes, you kin see him, but don't stop long an' don't get him excited."

Scully walked directly in and seizing a chair carried it to the side of a bed in a corner. Upon the bed lay a youth of his own general appearance, no better and no worse, except that his frame was wasted and he gave evidence of pain.

"Well, Larry, how're you feelin'?" inquired Scully, as he lightly shook the sick boy's hand.

"I'm a goner," the sufferer replied, weakly. "My back's broke; that awful run after the fall fixed me. God! I almost wish I'd a-stopped an' got ketched, but I don't, though."

Larry Madigan came to this painful state by a fall from a wall sustained one night two weeks before while escaping under pursuit from a factory yard where he had been stealing brass fixtures. Despite a grievous hurt he had run many blocks and had at last been brought to 'Mandy's.

"I guess I'd pull through if I got to the hospital or had a doctor, but I can't have neither one without bein' give up to the cops. I'd die, Scully, for a fact I would, before I'd do another bridewell time."

"It's pretty tough," laughed Scully. "I've been there myself. But you ain't a-goin' ter croak or anythin' like that, Larry lad, d'ye think?"

"I don't know, Scully, I'm mighty much down," Larry replied, feebly. "It hurts me ter walk, but I'm glad ter see yer, Scully."

"Don't talk, then, old man. Keep up yer nerve. There's a gang of us comin' around ternight, and we'll drop in an' see you. Be good and don't worry yourself. Bye-bye to you for a bit, bye-bye," and Scully tenderly squeezed the thin hand extended to him and went out.

On the outside he said to Aunt 'Mandy: "Larry's mighty sick, ain't he?"

"Yes, chile," replied 'Mandy, solemnly, "he's mighty sick. W'y he's fallen so weak and puny that he's hardly

got strength to las' him a day. He won't hab a doctah, because he's fraid uv gettin' cotched. I never saw a boy so mortal fraid uv gettin' cotched. I'd get a doctah anyhow but I know he'd die right off in a fit. Maybe he kin tucker it out, but et looks mighty unsartin."

"Well, it's too bad for Larry. He's a likely lad. But I dropped around more purtikerly," said Scully, "to tell yer that some of de bucks is goin' ter have a dance in Ginn's loft ternight, an' after de shindig four of us wid our ladies want to come 'round an' use up a lot of nice provender we've got."

"Where's it frum? Is it frum Appel's store. Ef it is I won't handle it, 'cause deys raised so much fuss 'bout dat job an' air lookin' high and low an' might come right in yere," said 'Mandy, anxiously.

"Now, now, now, don't get excited, aunty," the young man replied. "It ain't from Appel's store nor from no store you ever heard of. It's ham, an' canned turkey, canned peaches, canned pineapples, sweet crackers, all sorts of jam and the like of that, with the labels all tore off an' fixed so's the man what made it wouldn't know it It is four times as much as we kin eat, an' we'll have plenty good licker, an' all what's left's yours. It is all right."

"I guess," replied 'Mandy, as though consenting reluctantly. "W'at time?"

"Oh, about 1 o'clock. I'll bring the stuff around about 7 an' you kin be fixin' it for us and be makin' de coffee."

With this the young man made off and Aunt 'Mandy resumed her occupation in a pious frame of mind.

CHAPTER XII.

ROYAL FELLOWS.

Larue had paid the iceman's bill, the brewer's bill, and the sundry other bills which cut the net profits of the rum business to a figure under gross receipts, and was ensconced for the morning alone behind the bar. Jerry was clattering among his pots and dishes in the rear of the lunch-counter preparing for the noon "rush" in his department. The rain poured steadily, few customers came, and Larue, for want of occupation, stood the greater part of the time in the middle of the room, with his hands folded under his white apron and chewing a cigar, as he contemplated the heavy, drab clouds that trailed on the opposite roofs. The business of the night past and of that to come was certainly calculated to supply him with sufficient mental pabulum.

He was thus reflectively engaged when the door fairly burst open. Two men, closing their umbrellas as they came, dashed in and striking mock-tragedy attitudes shouted: "Welcome home, Charlie Ross!"

"Why, Hinckey Dink!" ejaculated Larue, after a moment's bewilderment, "and Holy Joe!"

"How are you, Jack, old boy?" both again shouted, and

extending their hands they rushed upon him. They laughed long and loud and pounded Larue heartily over the shoulders and back, while he, in the undemonstrativeness of his nature, merely smiled and permitted them to wring his hands.

Hinckey Dink was the familiar alias of James McTavish, a short man with a Roman nose, a big mustache, and oily hair parted behind a lurching felt hat. Holy Joe was the professional name of Joseph Sawyer, a tall, thin man with red, tubercular face, thin Burnside whiskers, and a high hat.

"How long have you been gone? I don't exactly remember," Larue said as soon as he had gotten behind the bar and produced the glasses and bottles.

"One year the first of next month," said they both, still laughing. "We got back this morning, and you're the first old friend we struck out to find."

"Well, what luck?" queried Larue.

"What luck?" they roared, leaping back, and with a swift glance that discovered no one about save Jerry, they each drew from both pockets of their trousers, large rolls of bank bills, which they held up for a moment and then buried, with another burst of laughter.

"Well, that looks good, sure enough," said Larue. "How did you do it."

"We'll tell you," they replied together, and tossing off the greeting bumpers with a great collision of glasses, they drew close together at the lower end of the bar.

"Now, to take the lead in our story and to make sure that our friend Joe don't lose his proper credit, I want to read

the official record of our first little scheme," said McTavish, and producing a newspaper clipping from his pocket he continued: "This is from the Grangerville, Indiana, Gazette, and I'll read it."

They bent their heads closer together and McTavish read softly:

"The Gazette warns the people of Grange County to beware of the pretense of any stranger, no matter how plausible he appears, who may come into their midst, for there can be no limit to the cunning of the person who this week perpetrated upon Mr. Abraham G. Dross of Tecumseh Township the gigantic swindle it pains us to record herewith. Mr. Dross is known as one of the most substantial farmers of this county, and is a man of exceptional thrift. It is also known that it has been a peculiarity of his, ever since the failure of the State bank of Grangerville, in 1865, to avoid all institutions of loan and deposit and to keep all his savings at all times under his personal care. Thus, when a man of his notable circumspection falls before the crafty designs of the swindler and confidence man, it behooves all persons to look out. Last Monday morning a lean and hungry looking tramp came to Mr. Dross' door, and, being denied any food or alms, stated that he had the night previous slept under the old blasted and limbless poplar in Mr. Dross' millet field and dreamed that there was money in the hollow at the top. He begged that he might chop the old skag down, but Mr. Dross drove him away. On the next morning and the morning after that the tramp appeared with the same story, and again besought Mr. Dross that he

might fell the tree. Considering the fellow a harmless crank, and rather desiring the tree out of the way, Mr. Dross consented, and, providing the tramp with an axe, set him to work and looked on. After an hour's hard work, in which the tramp showed poor knowledge of the uses of an axe, the tree fell, and what was Mr. Dross' surprise to behold rolling from the riven top of the skag a great hoard of silver coin. Counting them with the tramp Mr. Dross discovered that there were just 12,000 Mexican silver dollars, mostly of old date. It may be considered that Mr. Dross acted unwisely on principle, as the discovery should have been published with a view of establishing the proper claimant, but he decided to divide it entirely with the tramp. Gunnysacks were procured, and as each weighed about fifty pounds, the tramp complained that he could not safely get through the country with such a burden. After considerable bargaining Mr. Dross agreed to give the tramp $5,000 in greenbacks for his share, and as Mr. Dross had the money in the house the deal was consummated at once. The tramp left and will doubtless never be seen again, for the next day, which was Thursday, Mr. Dross, growing suspicious, took the two bags of coin to the Farmer's Trust Bank here, when Cashier Harris discovered that every dollar of it was counterfeit. Mr. Dross describes the swindler as a tall, thin, red-faced, dark-haired man, with the most ragged clothes, and the description has been sent to all points by Sheriff Martin."

"Well, that beats my time!" ejaculated Larue, whose astonishment was unfeigned. "How did you get on to that?"

"Our old friend Joe, right here, just made it out of his head," laughed McTavish, "and, after all, it was just as easy as A B C. I'll tell you about it. You see we went from here to Indianapolis and there we met Lem Maxwell. Well, Lem, as you know, has got more useful properties than any man in America, and we went up to his place and there we saw this coin. He and Birdie McCann made it ten years ago, when Mexican dollars were plenty on the market, and they were just ready to go south with it, when the pneumonia took off Birdie and three years for a job in a small Hoosier town settled Lem. When he got out Mexican dollars had gone out of circulation, and he's had this load of queer on his hands ever since. He said that it cost a hundred to make at the time, but that he would give it to me and Joe for forty dollars. We had no use for it until, about three nights later when we were in bed, this scheme popped into Joe's head. Well, we decided to try Grange County, and I went down to Grangerville and pretended that I had a scheme to boom real estate around there. I talked free and got on to the record of this old guy, Dross. I sized up the place by one drive past it and spotted the old tree. I then called Joe down from Indianapolis and he came along with the stuff in a box of cheap plow shares. That night we sneaked out to Dross' place in a wagon, got up the skag with telegraph climbers, chopped a big enough hollow in the top, and dumped in the coin. Then I came back to town and Joe lived in the bush till the job was done. I stayed around the town a week after, howling about the scandalous swindle as loud as anybody. Then I went

down to Louisville, promising to be back presently with money enough to buy all the corner lots in Grangerville, and met Joe who was none the worse for wear."

For some minutes Larue buried his face in his hands and laughed silently, as the daring plot unfolded to his mind. As McTavish concluded he raised his head and said, with a sweep of his hand and more emphasis than was common with him: "Boys, I give you the belt. That's the best job I ever heard of. It's only a few times that I've seen so much money turned and I'm sure the trick was never beaten in cleverness. But go on, Mac. What did you do next?"

"No; you tell the yarn. You've got a better knack of tongue than I have," laughed Joe, as McTavish desired to yield him place as the narrator.

"Well," resumed McTavish, "in a week we went to Cincinnati, and there we laid around for a few days on the top shelf, you bet. But as it wasn't the right season to loaf, we fixed to get a lightning-rod outfit and some of those promissory-note contracts that you tear in two, you know, like Gentleman Davis got up several years ago, when it was my turn all of a sudden to think of a scheme. Joe fell to it like a mice, and we got up a great game of talk which we were to use on system. And right here let me say that Joe—that's right, blush, you shy, young thing—has got the gift of gab to beat any man I ever run across. Why, he'd talk the gold off a rolled plate collar-button. Well, here's the result of my 'projicking,' as the niggers say," drawing out another small newspaper clipping, he

proceeded: "This is from the Stubblefield Banner of Stubblefield, O."

As before, McTavish read in an undertone to his closely attentive auditors:

"Fairfax County can contribute an experience costly to a number of its farmers, during the past week, by which the entire rural section of the state can take warning. The apparently inexhaustible resource of expedient possessed by those men who flash like meteoric visitations through some country-side, despoiling the peaceful and hard-living farmer, sickens the mind, while their invariable escape from punishment rankles the soul with baffled rage. Whence they come and whither they go is one of the mysteries of the age. The lair of the confidence man and the cave where the winds are born are equally matters of wild conjecture."

McTavish paused in his reading to vent his merriment, while the others laughed with him.

"The fellow that wrote that must have been riled, sure. Go on, I'm set to know what you ducks did to put him on such a high-daddy," said Larue.

"What makes me laugh is to think what those country folks would say if they could run this lair down to an honest little joint like this. I'll bet they have an idea that we live in a place full of cog-wheels and clock-works, figuring, with the devil's help, on new jobs to hoodwink the earth. I've a mind to write a book some day, and call it 'The Con Man as He Is; or, Every Man His Own Dead-Beat,' and prove in it how simple the art of faking for a living is.

But that ain't reading the story," said McTavish, and he returned to the clipping:

"Two weeks ago last Thursday a tall, well-dressed man, with a smooth, red face and polished manners, drove up in a fine buggy to Adam Fordham's farm on the Running Water, in Cherry Township, and made to Mr. Fordham a brisk and business-like offer to buy his eighty acres of upper wooded land. At forty dollars an acre the land was worth $3,200, but the stranger, who gave the name of Wainwright, said that he would give $4,000 off-hand for it, as he wanted it immediately to get out stave timber. Fordham agreed, and Wainwright deposited $100 to clinch the bargain, and went away promising to be back that day a week with the cash and receive the deed. Sure enough, last Thursday, bright and early, Wainwright returned with his buggy and elegant roadsters. He had barely stepped down, and was hitching his horses, when a road wagon with a spanking team dashed up from the opposite direction. A short man, with a big, waxed mustache, and chin whiskers, and the fatique uniform of an army officer, jumped down from the wagon and, walking briskly up to the gate, inquired for Mr. Fordham. Being told that he was addressing Mr. Fordham the putative soldier said that he was Major Fife from Columbus Barracks, and being about to retire from the army, he was looking for a site for a country seat, and had heard that Mr. Fordham had some upper woodland on the market. Mr. Fordham protested, but the Major insisted that he be led over the farm, and Mr. Wainwright consenting to wait in the house, the farmer set forth to the woods with the Major.

There seemed to be no acquaintance whatever between Mr. Wainwright and Major Fife, and, indeed, during the course of the conversation, the former made some disparaging remark which the latter took up with offense, and high words were averted only by Mr. Fordham's interposition. The Major went into ecstasies over the wooded piece, and upon being told, as before, that it was useless to ask for it on account of the contract with Mr. Wainwright, the Major offered $5,000 for it, spot cash, and counted half the amount out of his pocket. On returning to the house Mr. Fordham stated the Major's offer to Mr. Wainwright, who, after some talk, agreed to sell his claim for $400, equivalent to $300, and the return of his deposit. Mr. Fordham ran out and told this to the Major, who seemed highly delighted, and jumping into his wagon whipped off on a little drive down the orchard lane, just to look at the growing fruit, as he said, for a minute until Wainwright had been disposed of. Mr. Fordham at once gave his check to Wainwright, who with hearty farewells took his departure. Waiting an hour for the Major's return, Mr. Fordham strolled out to the orchard, and to his surprise discovered several panels down in the fences between the lane and the turnpike, and the fresh trail of a road wagon cut through the fields. In about another hour he awoke to the full realization of the fact that he would never see either Wainwright or the Major again and that he was robbed of $300. Not the least daring feature of the case is that four farmers living at intervals of five miles along the Emmettville road, due west from Fordham's, were successively visited by these fellows

in precisely the same manner as above related, and in every instance, without the slightest hitch, they secured the $300, which seemed their standard figure. Before 3 o'clock in the afternoon they were in Stubblefield, where they cashed their checks and whence all trace of them is lost. They are doubtless safely over the Indiana line."

"Then there's the names of the farmers we touched and a long story upon some protective association they've got up to hang all smooth strangers in the future," said McTavish, concluding the reading.

"I've got nothing to say, boys," remarked Larue, stretching himself. "All that's 'way beyond my reach, but I'd like to know why you got those newspapers?"

"Why to find out if the victims were squealing and to see whether the process was written up. When it's printed, you see, it keeps us out of that range of sand hills and makes the whole business pretty dangerous to handle anywhere for a while," explained McTavish.

"And say, Hinckey Dink, do you carry those bits of newspaper around in your pocket?" queried Larue.

"Cert. Why not."

"Nothing, only if I was a copper and had occasion to run you in for anything I'd wonder what a mark like you cared about such stories. I might call up Grangerville or Stubblefield and ask for close descriptions. I might bring one of the suckers over to look at you. Now, putting it flat, suppose some unfriendly fellow who knew you in Cincinnati, or Indianapolis, or whatever burg you struck next, or even here to-day, which is a likely happening, should run you in

for a vag or for anything. He'd have found these clippings in your clothes. He'd have thought about it sure. To get papers from these little towns you were likely there, and if there about the time such a job was done—well, it would be worth looking into."

McTavish stared reflectively at Sawyer and Sawyer beamed wistfully upon McTavish. They laughed a thin frightened laugh, and Joe remarked merely: "Tear 'em up, Mac, tear 'em up."

Hinckey Dink slowly tore the clippings into fine bits and committed the particles to a spittoon.

Larue laughed a harsh guffaw, and, striking the bar heavily, exclaimed: "By God, it beats all how the cleverest rascal will leave the bars down somewhere. Pards," and leaning over and dropping his voice said with emotion, "little things like that scare me. I'm losing my nerve. I've got only one more job to which I'm promised, and when that's done I'll sell this hole, move to the end of creation, and live honest."

At this moment the door, which since the advent of McTavish and Sawyer had offered merely a target for the slanting shafts of rain, opened and a tall, gray gentlemen with a grim, shaven face strode in. It was Jarvis.

"This way, if you please, sir," Larue addressed him, stepping promptly forward and waving his hand toward the rear. Jarvis proceeded without a word. Larue, turning to Jerry, said, "Mind the bar," and with Jarvis entered the farthest stall, closing and locking the door.

The confidence men followed the two with their eyes, and turning to each other drew a long whistle. The

distinguished appearance of Jack's friend was a puzzle to them. A boy entered. It was Hackles.

"Hold on, young fellow, where are you going?" demanded McTavish, seizing the boy with playful rudeness.

"Aw, come off; will you?" snarled the boy, writhing in his grasp.

"What are you doing here?" now sternly demanded McTavish.

"I live here," said Hackles.

"That's Larue's kid," interposed Sawyer.

"So it is—so it is," exclaimed the other, releasing the boy. "You've grown, young man. You used to be a pretty hard lot as much as a year ago. Have you improved any? How often have you ridden in the yellow gal (as Chicago's black maria is often termed) since I saw you last? What, nary a time? Say, are you much of a dipper?"

"I guess I am," replied Hackles, grinning.

"Well, then, Joe and me will give you fifty cents apiece if you touch that old fellow's leather, who's back there now with Jack, when he comes out.'

"Never mind. Don't get him to do it. It may raise a row, and we don't need it," Sawyer protested.

"Oh, yes; just for fun. I want to try the kid," urged McTavish. "Now, my fine fellow, here's the way we'll work it. You get outside and Joe and I will stand at the door, just leaving him barely room to get out. As he steps out you step in, crowding past him. There's your chance. Do you catch?

"I catch," replied Hackles, confidently. Now where's yer halvers?"

"You'll get them all right enough. Now get ready and mind your eyes."

Hackles went out and stood at the side of the step. McTavish and Sawyer, the latter with reluctant good humor concurring in the project, took their stations at the door on the inside. It was as much as a quarter of an hour before the stall opened. Jarvis and Larue emerged and walked together as far as the narrow avenue leading behind the bar, into which Larue turned, remarking in tones not so low as to be inaudible: "I'll not forget it, sir. To-morrow."

Jarvis strode on. At the door he was given but scant passage by the two men, and in stepping out Hackles, acting on his cue, crowded by him. There was a moment's stoppage of the progress of both. The man scowled, re-adjusted his disordered coat, and, raising his umbrella, moved up the street. The boy dropped down and rolled into the saloon.

"I got there, you bet," he cried, as soon as the door was closed. "But goody goodness, dat's de feller w'at I had his hired man pinched."

"What's all this about?" demanded Larue, stepping forward.

"Why, your dutiful son has touched your old friend's leather," laughed McTavish, pointing to a red Russia pocket-book in Hackles' hand.

"Give it to me," said Larue, sternly.

Hackles obeyed, and Larue, dropping the pocket-book

into his pocket, gave the boy a long and peculiar look and turned away.

Hinckey Dink and Holy Joe never omitted mention of Jack's look and the queer play of his eyes resting fixedly on the boy, when, with the light of subsequent events, they told the story.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN DARKNESS AND STORM.

Between the stroke of midnight and the break of day lie the canonical hours of crime. Darkness and the slumber of the world palpably commend this period to the agents of evil purposes. From the earliest day of recorded time the ethics of dark trades have sealed and authorized these hours. Solomon, in his wisdom, penned his cognizance of the fact. It was ancient even in his day.

Nature sounds her last summons, prolonged and sonorous, at 12 o'clock of the night. There are twelve strokes and the bells utter their peals with unusual distinctness. The attention rests upon the proclamation of this hour as upon no other in the sweep of the day. Belated men pause upon the time to say, with awe or recklessness, as meets their spirit, "It is midnight." Beyond midnight pleasure is a revelry and revelry sinks to debauch; labor is slavery and slavery is a crime. To the degrees of crime there is the student's self-consumption and the thief's quest of prey. And when the weather is foul, crime rests an especial sanction upon this sombre season.

Larue, then, had little to question in outer conditions, as

it fell evening, for the night of that wretched day was setting in with unabated inclemency. He had been out a great part of the afternoon and had just descended from a short but important session with Bess. He had found her sitting up, somewhat restored in strength, but still disfigured and suffering. She was in a surly and unreasoning temper, as never before with Larue, and it at once became his malignant pleasure to shake and browbeat her into a state of attention to what he had to say. He spoke with solemnity and once or twice with a quaver of real feeling, for which he instantly atoned with a volley of curses. He told her the business of the night and more. He adverted repeatedly to the magnitude and uncertainty of the task before him, and, failing to draw one word of gesture of heed or sympathy, he flew into a towering passion. Bess had sat leaning from him, so shielding her face with her arm, as though in constant apprehension of assault, that nothing of her muffled countenance could be seen. In the violence of his passion he jerked her from the chair, bore down her hands, tore the bandage from her face and yelled: "Don't put on any airs with me, or by heaven I'll grind you to pulp. Don't you see that I'm remembering your interests? Don't you feel that I am doing more for you than I would for any woman on earth? Ain't you got any heart? Why can't you say something? Do you want me to give you last night's dose again? Look at me! look at me!"

With her bruised, pale countenance and set lips Bess obeyed and looked at him with the whole force of her one

open eye. There was neither the fear nor sympathy he invoked in her gaze, but her eye was turned upon him with a steady, unwavering precision that surprised, half-frightened him. Flinging her from him he seized some articles he had set out from the wardrobe and rushed from the room.

The suspicion he slightly felt that he had gone too far, that he was losing his supreme control of her, would have waxed to apprehension if he had seen her, ere his feet reached the foot of the stairs, leap from the floor and fling herself with clutching fingers and frothing lips upon the door he had just closed behind him.

The early hours of the night passed in the saloon as a thousand such before. A fire was kindled in the stove, for although the month was May the wind blew bleak and the rain was chilly. The familiar rabble, as at other times, trooped in and out, alternating between the stove and the bar, steaming its collective garments and vulcanizing its individual systems against further exposure.

Then it came midnight and the last sodden loiterer was forcibly excluded.

Once, years ago, a certain Herman Fink maintained on the "West side" a cheap lodging-house and doggery. It was so famous a resort for homeless drunkards and ruffians of mean wits that the name of the host and house fastened upon the class and to this day the Chicago police apply the word "fink" to that low character commonly termed "a bum." Thus the finks or bums, among the last to heed Larue's warning of the hour, tumbled out into the wet,

and grouping for a moment on the walk in hoarse and hiccoughing discourse, drifted asunder and away.

Larue locked the door, accounted his receipts of the day, noting the result in a small blank-book, and thrust the paper money into his pocket. He then extinguished the lights in the saloon, save one low jet over the bar, and went back to the farthest stall, to which allusion has been made hitherto. Disclosed within by the tiny flame of a dark-lantern lamp, removed from its casing, sat Minton, "the scout," who at some time earlier in the evening had entered all unperceived. He made no remark, but resorted to a bottle which sat at his side on the table, as Larue came in. The latter was equally taciturn and stopping in a corner tumbled over a pile of articles recently laid there and drew forth a strong canvas bag. From this he took, one after the other, and set upon the table, a short-handled but heavy sledge, a small bellows, a powder can, a coil of fuse, a considerable length of rope, a ball of twine and some pieces of thick cloth. Seating himself at the table he began to examine these articles, followed in every movement by the scout's attentive gaze. Satisfied, evidently, with his inspection, Larue bound the cloths with the twine about the head of the hammer and restored all the articles to the bag. Resorting to the pile again he took up and donned, in order, a pair of rubber boots, a thick pea jacket with a wide collar which turned up high around his neck and face, and a skull cap. Thus arrayed he burst on the sight so properly in his character that the scout was struck with it and grinned.

"What tickles you?" demanded Larue, sharply.

"Nothin', only I was thinkin' that you look about as much of a gentleman in that rig as I do. But say, how long before we get a start on?"

"A minute or so—aye, there's our party," and a noise at the rear door caught their ears.

Larue slipped out and in a moment returned, accompanied by a tall man in a big overcoat and a low-vizored cap, who seemed to seek a disguise by burying his chin in the folds of some red flannels wrapped around his neck. Nothing of his countenance was revealed in the feeble light.

"Scout, this is our friend, Charley Ox," said Larue.

Minton flushed angrily, and the suspicious scrutiny with which he had regarded the stranger was now touched with hostility. "Charley Ox" is to the thief as equivocal as "Mr. Jones," or "Mr. Smith" to you, gentle reader, or "John Doe" to a policeman, and he who presents himself to co-operate in an important enterprise with a masquerade in his dress and a subterfuge in his name is fairly to be suspected.

"Oh, your name is Charley Ox, is it, eh?" sneered the scout. Well, sir, Charley Ox is a chestnut too old and wormy for me to swaller, an' unless you lift that cap, pull down them rags, flash your face full into this light and hand out a better name, you quit or I quit, d'ye mind?"

Larue gave the alleged Mr. Ox no opportunity to reply, for seizing the scout by the throat he forced him into a chair, roaring under his breath: "Quick, quick. Come tell. Whose running this thing, you or me? Spit it out right here before we budge another peg."

The scout struggled a moment, his hand instinctively

seeking his pocket, at which he suddenly checked himself, and, extending both palms, exclaimed hurriedly: "It's all right, Jack, I forgot. Only it's the first job I ever tackled where I didn't know my friends. But I'm with you and I'll say no more."

"Mind you don't," said Larue, sternly, releasing his grasp. "Now lend a hand."

The pile in the corner was resolved into a number of blankets and the bag. The trio lifted these and softly filed out, Larue in the rear, locking the doors behind. In the alley stood a horse and wagon, brought there by Ox. Larue mounted to the seat, and the scout, clambering in over the tail-piece, stretched himself at full length in the bed and covered his form with the blankets.

Larue whispered to Ox: "It's clear to you, is it? You meet us on the northeast corner if the "collar" is close and we pass on. If he is at the other end of his beat or somewhere off, why we don't see you and drive straight in."

"I understand," replied Ox, and he disappeared northward.

Larue drove out of the alley by the opposite direction and turned eastward to the lake-front boulevard, into which he swung and jogged north. If he was observed it was only to excite the observer to a sense of the dismal figure cut by a belated expressman. It rained at this time with increased violence, and the wind, hard from the tumbling lake, drove the shower in headlong charges and swept up from the pavements and down from the reeking roofs a spray which filled the air and through which the street lamps shone

with a faint, nebulous glow. A turn and still another brought Larue to the appointed spot, and with no sight of Ox he drove abruptly into an alley in the middle depth of which he stopped. He rested and hearkened. The night and the storm seemed to concentrate here. The darkness was utter; the horse at his feet, the wagon behind, the buildings at his side, and the sky above were invisible to Larue. The wind plunged through the narrow way with remitting shrieks and the rain fell in floods.

Satisfied with his observations he roused the scout from beneath the soaking blankets, and both groped their way to the buildings on the right, leading the horse.

"Here we are," whispered Larue, and he halted, with his hand brushing tentatively over the iron shutters which sealed a lower-floor window in one of the buildings. From his pocket he drew a pair of steel calipers, with which he described, in the centre of one panel of the shutter and as high as his breast, a circle fifteen inches in circumference. The points were sharp and the periphery of the circle furrowed through the paint was plainly traceable by touch.

"Now your drill," he called to the scout, who produced the little instrument we have seen successfully tested. Our presence at the experiment obviates a close scrutiny of the next half-hour's work, nor would we care to thrust our hand out in such a night to feel the groping course of the drill about the circle. Jack and the scout alternated, and thirty minutes had admitted the former's arm; the inner bolts were drawn and the shutters were open. The men peered in cautiously at first. It was a jewelry store. The shelves

were loaded with clocks, mantel objects, bronzes, and plated ware, but the plush cushioned show-cases were divested of the costly wares exposed there by day. So much was discernible by the light of the jets blazing at the front and rear of the store. The operations of the next few minutes were really critical. Although there was no one within, the two men were plainly visible to any one on the outer front who had closely explored the interior. But the down-streaming rivulets and cross-playing splashes of rain hindered vision and the chance of detection from this source was very slim.

Minton took occasion here to say, "Kin I ask if Charley Ox is on watch?"

"He's all right and you'll hear from him soon enough if there's cause to," returned Larue, and then with a sharp glazier's knife he began swift operations upon the window. There were four panes to the sash and he selected the upper left-hand pane of the lower sash. With a practiced hand he cut away the putty sealing, pried up one side of the glass, and took out the pane entire, setting it carefully on the ground some feet aside. Then, reaching through the sash, he slipped the bolt and noislessly raised the window. After another pause and reconnoitre he climbed over the sill and, running to the middle of the room, turned out the rear light. Bearing the canvas bag, which he had been shielding from wet as much as possible, the scout followed. There was enough light forward to avert suspicion, but the rear was now cast in an impenetrable gloom. Turning with a directness that proved pre-knowledge, Larue approached a large

safe which stood shielded from observation by the office rail. The scout crept in close succession and handed his lantern to Jack, who liberated from it the merest ooze of light, with which he closely inspected the surface of the safe. Marking, at last, a spot half-way within the narrow space between the combination dial and the bolt-knob, Jack set the drill-point and began to bore. Steadily and with a light, rasping noise the incisive tool sunk through the heavy door until a slight lurch forward told Larue the work was done. Selecting then a chilled-steel punch from a parcel of instruments the scout spread out, he passed it in at the hole until it touched the bar of the bolt. Minton, meanwhile, sledge in hand, squared himself at one side. Larue held the punch firmly; Minton measured his stroke, and with a swift and sweeping swing brought the muffled head of the sledge squarely upon the mark. So sound was the safe, so unyielding the bar, that there was no noise and scarcely a jar, while the punch, still in Jack's hand, recoiled from the hole.

"That settles it," remarked Larue. "That lock can't be knocked-off. This job's got to be gophered."

"You're right," assented Minton.

Then, while Larue drilled anew and near the centre of the door, the other brought out the powder-can and diligently filled the bellows from it.

Jack's was a tedious task this time for he encountered a seemingly endless array of plates, and all of the several bits were worn to the verge of useless dulness ere he was through. At last he fell back with a long breath of relief and a word of commendation for the scout's thorough implements.

"Give me the blower and the can and you fetch the blankets," Larue said, and with the bellows he rapidly injected the gunpowder into the safe, where it fell between the outer casing and the inner door, until the quart contents of the canister were exhausted.

"That will do," said he then, arising. Now for the clothes."

With all the dispatch they could the two proceeded to envelop the safe with the blankets, binding them with the rope until the mammoth iron crypt stood swathed entire. Larue again dropped to his knees, cut a hole through the blankets so that the perforation in the door was exposed, and measuring off eight feet of the fuse he thrust it in until he felt the further end stirring amid the powder.

"Now get out and spy a bit. I'm allowing for just two minutes," he said under his breath.

The scout decamped with alacrity, Larue following as far as the window. A moment's hearkening to which the storm alone gave answer brought the whispered word from the scout: "Nothing wrong."

Larue retraced his steps, studying minutely the "lay" of the short interval between the office and the window to avoid all obstructions in his impending exit. He struck a match and stooped. There was a flash and a hiss and Larue leaped swiftly toward the window as the fuse began to melt in a tiny, sputtering spray of sparks. He was out at the window in a moment and standing at the horse's head, holding the bit and stroking its nose.

A blast more furious than its fellows in the seemingly

abating storm swooped with a shriek into the alley, and on the instant a prolonged, dull, and double-bass "boom" broke on the night—a sound so profound that its vibrations communicated to the walls and the very earth, yet again so muffled and undefined that it was as much a tremor as a sound. The horse did not even prick his ears.

"There she blows," said the scout, under his breath.

"And a good one, too. I wonder whether Ox heard. Wait!" replied Larue.

They stood there for full five minutes until satisfied that none had been untowardly aroused. Then they re-entered the store. The smoke was still ebbing through the texture of the blankets, and these they hastily removed. The safe's strong armor was racked and riven. The outer door was split from top to bottom so that the parts were easily lifted down. The inner doors were sprung inward and the bolts shattered. Without delay they drew them back and unfolded the interior. The soul of hungry greed stood avowed in the eyes of the burglars at the disclosure. Piled upon each other, stored on shelves and hoarded in pigeonholes, were jewels, gold and silver, wrought in all fashions of precious ware; watches, bracelets, charms, necklaces, brooches, rings, packets of uncut gems, the contributions of Eldorado and the caverned seas, in one bewildering treasury. A nervous haste lent itself now to the movements of the burglars.

"Spread out a blanket," ordered Larue.

The scout did so, and suggested anxiously: "Hadn't we

better load up our pockets with the loose things and some of these papers of sparks."

"No, sir," retorted Larue, hotly. "Ox has got to be sure of a square divvy in this business. Bundle 'em in."

One blanket was filled and knotted up, the booty being packed in a promiscuous mass. The remaining articles were tumbled into a second blanket; the safe was emptied, and, each making a burden, the men crept out. Larue was the first to the ground and threw the lighter parcel which he carried into the wagon. He paused to listen. Nothing but the storm. The scout, puffing and tugging with his harder task, clamored through the window. Larue stooped to help him with the load, when both started at full height and were riveted to attention by a sound. Although clear and well defined, it was not a sound to arouse the simple citizen on such a night. The householder or tardy wayfarer would have accepted it as a sob of the blast, some new variation in the moaning of the wind. It was distinct, soprano-like, and sustained, yet quavering on the breaths of air, diminishing and dying away mournfully like the howl of the gray wolf or the cry of the chouan. It, however, bound the two burglars in the chains of heed and apprehension, bated and painful. It was the warning word "Cheroo," uttered so as to mingle with the noise of the night.

"That's Ox! What's up? Quick!" whispered Larue, and with the scout's obedient aid he flung the bundle into the wagon and halted again with eye and ear alert.

The storm; no more. The wind, the rain and the dark-

ness of the early morning hour, no other sight or sound. A minute thus passed—a minute of high pulse and tense nerves for the burglars—when at the north end of the alley a figure appeared. It was a man silhouetted against the glowing haze about the lamp-post. He was deliberate of manner and paused. The light, as he turned, touched with keen effect a helmet wreath, a star upon his breast, and parallel rows of buttons down his front. He was a police officer.

Of all fatalities, the patient horse at this moment shook his wet sides with a great rattle of harness and pawed the puddling mire in which he stood.

Larue and the scout, muttering simultaneous oaths of restraint at the animal, crouched against the wagon. The noise attracted the officer and he advanced into the alley, shading his eyes with his hand, stooping and studying the black vista before him intently. This policeman's fate was his courage and his sense of duty, for he determined to explore the alley. One patrolman in a hundred, not more, will behave so under similar circumstances. An ominous noise of a foul night in a gloomy defile between big buildings, alone, with absolutely all the disadvantages of observation and defense, who will accept the inquest?

The scout crawled around the wagon, crouched, and whispered through the wheels to Larue: "What'll we do? I've got my knife."

The cocking of a pistol was the sole reply, and in wild anxiety he sought to protest. "Your knife," he hoarsely whispered. He dared no more. The officer, then too close,

walked up and, leaning over the end of the wagon, stirred the blankets with his club, saying aloud: "Well, well, what's this here?"

"That, you fool."

With the words there came a flash and a report. Larue had leaped from cover and was poised, leaning forward with pistol leveled. A billow of white smoke rose slowly, was caught by the wind and dissipated.

The officer reeled, clutched his breast, sighed heavily, and like a toppling column, fell at full length in the mud. The pistol shot rang with a babel of echoes amid the buildings and into the streets, out-vying the storm. Whom did it arouse? The scout at least would not wait to see. He sprang from his crouching posture with the ejaculation, "God Almighty! You've done it now. Cut for it."

There was disgust, anger and despair in his tone. Larue ordered him peremptorily to halt and leaped a stride or two in pursuit. A shrill whistle and blows of a club on a lamp-post were heard. Larue ran back and endeavored to climb to the seat of the wagon. The horse reared and plunged with fright. The whistle was repeated, much closer than before, and answered from a number of directions. A shuffle and tramp of feet were distinguished and two men ran into the alley from the north, as the officer had entered. A panic seized Larue; he dropped to the ground, caught the horse by the head and tried to drag it forward. The frightened animal only plunged the more. There was no other recourse and Larue fled at the top of his speed.

Out goes your worthy lamp, Tom Chase, my boy, as you

lie on your face in that black alley, suffocating with blood and mire. Gone is your manly presence from the ranks of duty; all your affairs of life summarily terminated; the red vomit chokes you and your limbs tremulously extend and are still.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DRAG-NET.

The two men whose approach had been the "last straw" to Larue's courage, amid the wild events in which his plans collapsed, were a police officer and a citizen. Jack's fleeing figure was faintly visible and upon it the policeman emptied the five barrels of his pistol without effect. The citizen just then stumbled over some object and fell down. The officer ran through the alley to the south end and, gaining no further sight of the fugitive, stopped and blew his whistle repeatedly. The citizen, left where he had fallen, was raising loud cries of terror in which the word "Murder" recurred. The officer hastened back and found the citizen quivering with horror and backing away from an indistinguishable object upon the ground.

"O, God, there's a dead man and I fell on him. Look officer, look," he gasped.

"The officer groped about until his foot touched the body. He stooped and felt of it. Whistles were ringing now from every quarter and the bobbing career of a bull's-eye lamp through the alley told that some private watchman was coming.

"Flash down that light," commanded the officer, as the watchman ran up. The man obeyed and the three started.

"It's a policeman. Oh, my Lord," cried the citizen in still greater alarm.

A look of unusual solemnity passed into the officer's countenance. He set his teeth, dropped on one knee, indifferent to the deep mire, and raised the prostrate, brawny form. Turning the body over he supported the head upon his arm, and with the citizen's proffered handkerchief wiped the muck and blood from the face of the dead.

"Tom Chase!" groaned the big officer. "Oh, my old partner! Who's done this?"

"Yes, yes, who's done it?" cried the frightened citizen.

"How could it have happened? I was a block away and heard the shot. Where did it come from?" exclaimed the watchman in doubt and fear.

"We'll find out," rejoined the officer with sudden resolution. "Help me here," and he rose, lifting the body.

Others were joining the group, policemen and citizens. Ready hands lent aid and the body was lifted into the comparative shelter of a doorway.

"Keep the alley clear and I'll send in the word," shouted the officer, and as others hastened to mount a guard at either end he rushed away. He ran to an adjoining corner, flung open the partrol-box there, swung the hand on the call dial, pulled down the hook, and in a second his station answered.

"Send the wagon and everybody in reach. Tell central and have them turn out lively. Tom Chase has been killed

on his beat," he shouted into the transmitter, and ere his last word the connections broke.

The speed with which action followed upon his summons would have gratified the excited officer to behold.

The drowsy operator was alive as by magic. He touched off the stable call with an explosive whirr and threw on the central station switch with a vigor which summarily roused the operator there, three blocks away.

"Lieutenant, sergeant, anybody, quick!" he cried at the same time, with such urgency of tone that the loungers in the sqad-room sprang to their feet and ran in upon him. Through the tube he shouted directions, adding: "Wait for the lieutenant," at that superior's bidding.

The trained horses, liberated from their stalls by the same weird current that awoke the gong, trotted to their places; the harness fell upon them and was fast. The driver bounded to his seat and the three men on duty clambered to their places. The lieutenant, catching the word, ran upstairs, where half a dozen reserves slept. In a moment he descended followed precipitately by these men, dressing as they ran. Into the wagon they went pell-mell. The lash, a beating of strong hoofs, a roll of heavy wheels, and the patrol was flying on the call. The central here answered and was apprised.

In the dim-lighted quarters of the detectives there sat at that time one man alone. He wore spectacles, which affected his countenance with a funny mixture of benignity and hardness. Cajoled by the drowsy tumult without, and freed of all observation, he was yielding to a secret, pleasing

bent and was reading a small volume of Irish history. His air was of cozy contentment, and he followed the lines with a movement of his lips and occasional pauses. This man was James Kinnane, of whom we have lost sight since leaving him day before yesterday at the Armory police court. To-night on the inside watch he has laid himself close to a light, and while the storm rages he is pursuing with patriotic relish the career of Brian Boru and the wars of the ancient kingdoms of Ivernia. He might have been well in the midst of the Boy King's most thrilling exploit when the operator interrupted him with the tidings we can anticipate.

"Call the wagon and the boys," ordered Kinnane, promptly, as, rising, he pocketed his book and spectacles and began to envelop himself in rubbers.

One annunciator led to expeditious movements in the stable of this station similar to those witnessed at the other patrol-house. Another touch agitated a gong in a chamber in a remote corner of the topmost floor of the massive building. One of the eight men who slept there arose and answered at the tube. With a loud halloo he repeated the order at the top of his lungs: "Everybody tumble out for murder duty."

There was a simultaneous tossing aside of coverlets, lightning toilets, and a rush and scurry all together through the halls and down-stairs; a swift seizing of waterproofs and a scrambling aboard the wagon, which rattled up from its stable, some blocks distant, and whipped away almost without a pause.

A young man, passing down the corridor, endeavored to

overtake the party, but was too far arear. He ran back to the telepnone-room and appealed to the operator, who told him the news. The young man heard half of it and rushed frantically out. He flew down the gloomy hall and dashed himself against a large door, through the glass panels of which a bright light flowed. At a long table within this room a dozen or more young men were playing cards with an altogether superfluous volume of noise and tobacco smoke Throwing the door open the newsbearer yelled: "Every mother's son climb out. A cop's been killed in the street right under our noses. Come a runnin'."

One loud shout, a crashing overthrow of chairs, a scattering of cards, chips and pipes, a momentary jam in the doorway, and, with directions shouted from lip to lip, the revelers abandoned the table and fled the scene. These were the night police-reporters of the newspapers, and for all their turbulence and questionable indulgence they will present you at breakfast, a few hours later, my dear reader, a succinct and well-phrased statement of the crime, so far as the facts are obtainable, in the very brief time that remains to them.

The operators at both stations were left with instructions to order every man from his post to the scene of the crime the moment his half-hourly report came in.

* * *

There are two material means employed in catching criminals. One is the ferret and the other is the drag-net. The first is what has been called the "mental feature" of analysis. The drag-net, to waive the simile, is far-reaching

physical force. The ferret moves on inferences extracted from facts by the processes of reason, and acts ever on the lines from effect to cause. It is purely psychical and reveals the serenest genius of man. Hence it has been the favorite custom to attribute to the "detective" the use of the ferret, while through the character the author has sought to project his own mentality. Such writers are of an unquestioned high order of mind, and the creators of Dupin, Lecocq, et al., so familiar to the reading world, have earned a most honorable mention. The drag-net, on the other hand, is thoroughly gross and mechanical. In the great majority of instances it is the most practical. It would be for that reason, if for none other, that the real detective would resort to its use. The fact, however, is that it is alone available to his range of talents. The ferret co-exists with education because that degree of analytic power of which we speak must come of mental training, from which there inevitably accrue to the mind an amount of information proportionate to the rigor and prolongation of the drill. Officers of the police are notoriously ignorant and therefore cannot be analysts. It is true that they, as well as other uninformed men, acquire a creditable degree of sagacity and numerous clever tricks of the memory, but they admit of no more comparison to the standards of Poe, Gaboriau and other respectable romanticists than does the street-lamp to the sun, or—if we dare—"Satyr to Hyperion." In point of effectiveness, however, there is nothing to be said, as the crimes of romance differ so radically from the actual misdeeds of men, and the fact that offenders in life

are punished with tolerable regularity is the best commentary upon the service of our peace guardians. Thus it is that the drag-net best meets the needs of the police. Preliminary to its use the "ear-marks" of a crime are noted and if not clear enough to identify the author, the class to which experience has taught that such signs belong is hauled in. Then from the class, the *one*—the culprit—is isolated by expedients, widely varying, of which the most common in the United States is force, as the incidents of our story may yet develop.

* * *

From opposite directions the two partrols reached the alley at almost the same moment. Small knots of wayfarers, which an undue incident will collect in the streets of a city, at any hour, were huddled under umbrellas at both ends, vainly questioning the officers who kept them back. The detectives and the partrolmen leaped from their respective wagons and hastened to the spot where the interest naturally centered. As the moments passed the group was recruited by policemen coming from their posts and the reporters who arrived in the order of their relative speed. Attention was first given to the removal of the dead officer. He was lifted into one of the patrol wagons and with a small attendance conveyed to his late station, there to be made humanely presentable to his family later in the day. The task of raising him to the litter was performed with much tenderness and solemnity and it seemed a sacred duty that each officer should crowd around, and that a light should be held close to the face of the dead ere the rough tarpaulin pall

covered it, and the wagon drove away. Each big fellow took his look with sorrow in his face and mutterings of regret and indignation. It was to be a vengeful search for the murderer surely and all the more thoroughly performed.

The evidences of burglary had been discovered and some one had taken charge of the horse and wagon which still stood there. Kinnane presented himself to the lieutenant as in command of the detectives and the two hastily divided their fast-growing forces into small squads, each with a particular assignment. Both theft and murder were the evident work of professional "crooks" and the drag-net was to be drawn through crookdom. The lieutenant lifted his voice and said with earnestness: "Men, here is a bad job, and the reputation of the force is put up. Tom Chase, who we all know was one of the truest men and best officers that ever walked a beat, has been cowardly murdered, and it's the duty of every one of us to leave no stone unturned in running down the party or parties that did it. I promise the thanks of the entire force, from the chief down, to any of you that will catch the guilty man and bring him in, dead or alive. I will make your orders that no man needs to expose himself or stand on much ceremony for a minute in taking him. You all know your business, I hope."

This inelegant but significant speech was greeted with warm approval, and the squads broke away at a run to their duties. Others coming up successively were given their apportionment of the work by Kinnane, while the lieutenant, from the neighboring patrol-box, ordered the central to sound the *qui vive* at every station in the city. From

the precinct quarters in other central portions of the city similar sorties were made, while the district forces to the furthermost limits were given the alert.

In twelve minutes from the discharge of Larue's pistol a systematic search was under way and in less than half an hour every policeman on night duty had the news and was looking at some point for the culprit. A sense of personal indignity and a spirit of revenge spurred the policemen to the most sedulous efforts. Guided, each by the light of his own experience, they were merciless, and amid bursting doors and overturning furniture, protestations and curses, they scoured the regions of the lowly. The "likely" were arrested by the score, and no man of bad repute, whether housed or abroad, escaped seizure. The entire world of the vicious was aroused that night to account for itself. Fright and disorder swept through its confines, while the cells in the stations waxed populous.

The banquet for which Scully had prepared was at high tide. The six promised couples had exhausted their share of the festivities in Ginn's loft before 2 o'clock and had made the short journey to 'Mandy's through the muddy streets and the alley-way at a gallop. The ladies had been permitted to dry their wet feet and rather plashy shins at 'Mandy's genial stove while the coffee boiled, and the gentlemen were supposed to have placed themselves in attire by scraping the mud from their shoes upon the door-sill. The event was thoroughly informal—there was not even a talisman required at the door, but the brief list of guests would have read familiarly to many. There was Scully,

"de robber," to begin with, the father of the feast, a bridewell veteran of eighteen; Clabby Burns, scion of the old-time "Mush-Head" Burns, both father and son famous in their way; Boney Leggit, always mentioned as "the insinuating young man whose slender frame once permitted his escape through a ventilator of the county jail," and Dutch Pete, foremost in many a noteworthy malfaction.

It is not within the limit of description to pass closely upon the ladies of this party—hard fisted young Jezebels—for there is a solemn, almost sacred ban upon woman's fallen state that admits of neither parade nor jest. So while we find good-natured company for the nonce in discriminating print with Scully, Pete, and the boys, the girls will be accepted as present without review.

There were toasts, too, and songs of a sort, but your fine feelings have been sufficiently ridden over with phrases of vice, most tolerant reader. What is there of flash, cant, the language of thieves to edify or, say we, to amuse? The thief recites, omitting his corruptions of orthoepy:

"The fly bloke stags the guy and steers him into a budge-cap, where he works him with booze till he gets groggy on his pins. Then he touches his leather for a century and a half, but is copped out by the fly-bob who rushes him before his wigs, when he gets settled for a thriplet."

In so saying he points a salutary moral as follows: "The thief perceives his victim and inveigles him into a dram-shop, where he plies him with liquor until he becomes unsteady on his legs. Whereupon he (the thief) picks his

(the victim's) pocket of his purse containing $150, but is arrested by the officer in plain clothes, who arraigns him before the judge, by whom he (the thief again) is sentenced to three years in the penitentiary."

This is argot, "the language of the dark," and the propriety of its use and survival has been debated before. To be honest, the chat of the board cannot be told you. The best that could be done would fall far short of a fair report, for "argot" reeks.

But the banquet was at high tide and the viands passed around with an easy indifference to the law of courses. 'Mandy superintended the service; Clabby Burns, with one of the unlabeled cans emptied of peaches and filled with beer, was rising to an effort in sentiment worthy of the occasion, when Uncle Rube appeared at the door from the inner room with finger upraised.

"Larry has 'woke and pears ter be in a bad way," he said, solemnly.

All had inquired for Larry on arriving, but being told that he was sleeping had been content to let him rest.

"Go an' see him, aunty; maybe it's our noise bothering him," said Clabby to 'Mandy, who was hastening to the sick-room.

"Et aint your noise, chillern," said Aunt 'Mandy, returning in a moment, "Larry is goin'."

"Oh, not dying," was the instant cry as the company rose. There is a chord of universal kinship, and death touches it. Shock and sympathy were written, as by magic, on the rough countenances gathered there.

"Yes, an' mighty fas'," was the wench's ominous reply.

"We'll get a doctor now in spite of him, then," said Scully.

"He's beyond the doctah's help," replied 'Mandy, shaking her head.

"Then get a priest. Don't let him die alone," interposed Clabby. "There's one lives by the church in the next block."

There was a smoke-grimed, low-turreted church, uprearing a broad, black cross, in the next block. In the dingy residence at its side there lived a priest. His parishioners were worse than poor for the majority of them. But he was a good man, subject to the call of distress at any hour, in any state of weather, and to any spot. He had shrived many a victim of a violent end, and many a son of crime and daughter of shame, unused to such appeal, had sought the mercy-seat in the last hour through him. His home and his sanctuary were among them, begirt in a crowded mass by their abodes. He met the most of his flock, for a truth, on their deathbeds, but he fulfilled toward them the holy ordinances within him as earnestly as though the parting soul left monuments behind.

To this priest, then, Clabby Burns hastened his steps through the darkness and storm.

The others arose and filed softly into the room where the stricken youth lay. They surrounded his bed. He was beyond suffering and almost past the effect of sense, but his eyes moved the circuit of their faces and he smiled his recognition. The girls stooped closely over him to stroke his

hair, adjust his pillows, and address him such words of compassion and comfort as their drear souls knew. There was a clumsiness in their pity, unwonted to tenderness as was their lives, but what there was came from their hearts. Tears started to the eyes of some as the boy's deplorable plight became manifest.

One of the girls, a tall, strong-limbed creature, with a bold, masculine face, now softened with emotion—let the credit be hers—lifted his head in her arms and asked him in a choking voice: "Larry, didn't you never have no mother?"

The others approved the subject as one well selected. The dying youth shook his head with a weary look cast far beyond their clustered faces.

"Nor no father?" the girl inquired, with a deeper quaver to her voice.

Again the shake of the head and the distant gaze.

"Nor no brothers, no sisters, no nobody?"

The girl now sobbed with a wild pressure of inquiry as though to surely revive in the failing mind some fond one's memory.

Other girls sobbed, too, and still the searching eyes brought back from their unkenned explorations no cheering greeting.

"No," said Dutch Pete, presently, "Larry never had nobody. He was a Good Shepherd boy. I knowed him ever since he came out."

Silence succeeded save as the girls sobbed and the young men heaved long breaths and stirred uneasily, when at a

sound without someone whispered, "There comes the priest," and all fell back from the bed.

The priest moved directly to the bedside and taking the youth's thin hand looked benignly into his face.

Something like a glow of welcome and trustfulness kindled there.

The reverend father kneeled and the awed and grieving group moved farther back. Instinct bids retirement from such a counsel, as in the practicality of faith it is the sacred, secret communion of the soul with God. The holy man lingered in silence of subdued prayer. The dying thief may have rallied to words for him. Moments passed with painful laggardness for all save the one to whom they were the last. 'Mandy sat staring at her fire in the abandoned banquet-room. Rube stood by her, maundering the sentiments the hour in him evoked. Grouped as dumb as lay figures, in a corner of the death chamber, stood the late revelers. It was as though the roll of doom was being read and each abided his call. The gale whistled out of doors and the rain drummed upon the roof, cheating the scene of the silence its solemnity craved. But what is this petty staging to the tempest? It careers over worse on its way. It had done so once not far distant that night, and was to once again, rather close at hand, ere morning.

At last the priest arose. The hand he relinquished was ice, the face from which he turned away was marble, and the far-projecting eyes set in that face were stone.

On the instant the outer door burst inward with a crash of hasps and hinges and the police poured in. The leader,

in soaking uniform, with his eyes shifting fiercely in the shadow of his visor, a man of arms and iron, halted with a start as the holy figure of the priest stood revealed in the dim light. He signed his crowding comrades back and these giants in the panoply of the law, eager in their "consequential errand," doffed their helmets and crowded against the wall.

"The dead are at peace. To the living remain the concerns of life," said the priest, and he passed out.

The drag-net had taken in Aunt 'Mandy's.

* * *

At the scene of the burglary, the lieutenant returned presently from the patrol-box and decided with Kinnane that there was material enough for their occupation on the spot. A few officers were kept at hand for assistance in whatever offered a task. The two superiors examined the wagon and transferred its contents to the store, which they entered through the open window. The interior was lighted thoroughly, and a careful inspection began. Attention naturally focused upon the safe. The lieutenant and Kinnane scrutinized every part of it, and studied the traces of work and the burglar tools which they collected from the floor.

"This isn't amateur, anyway," said the lieutenant after a time.

"No ; they were cracksmen, sure", assented Kinnane.

"Say, it's a pretty job ; don't you think so?"

"Best piece of gophering done this long while."

"How do you suppose Chase got into it?"

"Heard the noise, I reckon, and come up to see. They didn't want anybody looking on."

"I should think they would have knifed him or slugged him."

"Maybe they tried to. We haven't looked at his body closely. He was a pretty husky man and could make a bad fight so that they had to shoot him. There's so much racket out to-night that a good-sized disturbance could have gone on before their shooting, without being heard. Did you ever see any of Badger Dick's work."

"No, why?"

"Nothing, only this looks like it and if I didn't know he was in Sing Sing I'd lay it to him first. But then there's Red Leary, Con Macready, Monkey Travis, and that little fellow we had last year—what's his name?—the Omaha Kid, and Bill Thomes and a number of old friends who'd fit in here pretty neat."

"Seems to me some one said they saw Bill Thomes around a few days ago. I don't believe it, there's so much out on him."

"If he's been here he's laid mighty low, because I've heard no word about it. Couldn't hardly be so. He knows there's no room for him here and that he'd have it put on him for the first loose job that came around. We'll leave things just as they are for some more of the old fellows to look at. They may get a notion," and thus saying Kinnane walked toward the window.

The lieutenant followed and they stepped out to be instantly seized by the crowd of now wildly importunate

reporters held back by the patrolmen. The lieutenant, better natured than Kinnane, gave heed and permitted the reporters to survey the interior while he furnished them facts and theories to aid in the construction of their stories. There was no clew, therefore nothing to conceal, and dealing liberally by the reporters, he was more speedily rid of them.

Kinnane, meanwhile, had looked over the horse and wagon with the aid of a lantern and now stepped back with a plan in his mind. At that moment a watchman who had been exploring the alley with a dark lantern, approached and handed him a red leather pocket-book, dirty and wet.

Kinnane took it, asking interestedly: "Where did you find it?"

"On the ground near the south end of the alley. It's just been dropped. I looked through it. There's no money in it, but there's papers that may help the case," was the reply.

Kinnane set his lamp on the wagon and close within its glow opened the book. A warm flush passed over him and his pulse bounded for the lapse of a breath. Then the first unsteadying sense of triumph crystallized into nervy confidence. He held the key of the case in his hand, for sundry papers within the book revealed that it was the property of Henry T. Jarvis, the suspect from Philadelphia.

"Lieutenant," he said, with particular fervor, "I want to make this case all my own. I have some notions. My idea is that this old horse will go home of himself when he gets hungry and nobody comes for him after awhile. Now if we

get his owner we may have something. At any rate we want to run down the horse's connection with this business. So, if you'll report for me and the other central boys to McMaster's at 7 o'clock, I'll follow the horse."

The lieutenant cordially concurred.

CHAPTER XV.

CHEATING THE HANGMAN.

The shots behind him put Larue to redoubled pace. He ran in that panic-stricken manner that heeds no obstacle in a career like a madly frightened beast. His exertions were furious. He gave miserable voice to his terror. He whimpered at every stride, and as he tripped in a rut and fell again and again over ash heaps and barrels he arose each time, almost howling with dread and rage. He tore through the alley and plunged across streets, blind and reckoning against nothing between him and cover. The thrill of murder swept away the tense passion in which it was committed and left him a naked prey to the terror which rode on that crime's consequences. The error of his methods; the utter suicidal folly of his conduct as a discriminating criminal, was an anguish to his heart. Robbed in that swirl of emotions of all his studied traits, Jack was an animal and that animal was stampeded.

"Stampede" is a coin of the untutored plains that won its way to currency. It is a ringing word, describing a prodigy. It comprehends in significance the flight of terrified herds and the thunder of their trampling hoofs. E'en from

the pastures it leaped to recognition on the pregnancy of its uttered sound. It implies insanity, for in that state of terror which braves all terror else the mind is lost. In one aborbing excess of fear, simple means of salvation are overwhelmed and crushed down. Witness the crisis in funds, the panic in a crowd, the rout in battle. These are "stampedes," and they are insane freaks. As cattle, affrighted at the bursting thunder-cloud, rush unfearingly into the abyss, so Larue, frenzied by pursuit, dashed wildly on heedless of the path.

Soaking with mire, bruised by repeated falls, panting in pain for breath, with lowered head, extended arms, and clutching his mud-choked pistol, he flung himself at last into the shallow doorway behind his abode. Crouching where he fell he turned with straining senses to explore his track. His brain boiled in a cauldron of hideous phantasms. His pulse and heart flew in a pell-mell of palpitations. There arose before him, in outlines blacker than the ebon night, a prison and a scaffold. In his delirium the whistling gale that buffeted him became the taunts and whips of fiends, sweeping by in a shrieking troop. He saw and felt his enshrouded figure sink like a dart through the gallow's trap and his throat constricted till he gasped and groaned for breath with the rope at his neck. He beheld himself dead, the sole corpse in the morgue at night and the rain that beat into his face was the drip above the slab. Legions of horrors sprang from his brain and swooping with wild detours into inky space charged, gibbering and screeching, down upon him. He imagined the sounds of

organized pursuit, the clash of arms, the baying of hounds, the gloating cheers of the narrowing chase, all drawing closer, closer, and near at hand, to die away, then grow again, and ebb and swell with the unceasing tide of goblins and the horrid panorama of death and hell, until an actual stir and a distinct and human voice not ten feet distant in the darkness aroused him to the defiant surrender of his life.

He leaped erect, and leveling his pistol in the direction whence came the sound, shouted in a jumble of words: "Who's that? Quick! One, two, three; or I'll let her go."

"It's me—the scout. Don't shoot. Let me up and get into the house, quick," came the swift, anxious answer.

The familiar and friendly voice broke the spell, and with languishing senses he fell face to face with the practical emergency of the time.

He lowered his weapon and whispered: "Come on up, Scout."

Minton's careful approach and his low words, "Get into the house quick" could be heard and Larue presently felt his groping hands and perceived his bulk.

Chattering as in a chill Larue took out his key, fumbled for the keyhole and opened the door. The Scout passed in and Jack, slowly locking the door with his trembling hands, followed. To the rear stall, their accustomed rendezvous, they cautiously bent their steps. Minton, on entering, produced his dark-lantern, took out its lamp, and with the most guarded care lighted its tiny wick. It illumined scarce a yard of space, but was enough.

"Get drink," said the scout, imperatively.

Larue nodded to indicate that was already his purpose, and, stealing out, dropped to his hands and knees and, crawling close to the wall behind the bar, secured the cob-webbed bottle and retraced his creeping course.

"As far as I can see through the mud your face looks chalky, Jack," remarked the scout with a sneer.

Larue, without reply, upraised his ghastly face and turned the contents of the bottle eagerly down his throat until he could drink no more. He dropped then heavily into a seat and Minton, with equal depth and avidity, drew at the bottle.

For a time both sat silent as the volatile stimulant was speeding the full circuit of their blood and re-investing their chilled and depleted energies. Jack especially profited, and as a flush stole into his grey cheek and a beam kindled in his eye he upstarted with a laugh and quaffed again.

His eye for the first time met the scout's and he laughed once more.

"I'm glad you kin laugh," remarked the scout.

"And why shouldn't I, eh? Why, this is the biggest joke on two old timers I've seen this many a moon," replied Larue, mockingly. "But what did you come around here for, damn you? Why ain't you cutting across country and out of this. Are you going to let yourself be bagged.

"Now it's my time to laugh," sneered the scout? "Why ain't I getting away? Well, I'll tell you why," and his tones grew venomous. "It's because I'm going it blind no more,

and I want to know just where I stand in this whole cussed business, and because I want to get in shape to get away."

Larue smiled intelligently, and drawing from his muddy pocket some wet and mire-stained bills began to separate them.

"In the first place, give it to me straight now, I want to know who Ox is," continued the scout.

"Ox; yes, Charley Ox. Let me see if you aught to know," and Larue paused as if reflecting. "Yes, it's only fair that you know your ground. Well, Ox is Bill Thomes."

The scout bespoke some slight surprise and said reproachfully: "Why wasn't I told? What was the use of keepin' me out of it?"

"Nothing, only you didn't need to know and it's all day with Bill if they run him down here. You know he's out on French leave."

"Well, well, so I'm out of secrets," mused the scout. "But it's all up now and won't happen again. Do you know what I think of you, Jack? You don't? Well, I'll tell you. You are the biggest fool that I ever trusted to boss a job. I'm the weakest kind of a fish to have been taken in by your flash ways and foxy looks. Don't you know that you ruined this job?"

Larue shot him a scowl and counted out some bills.

"For the Lord's sake," urged the scout, "how do you expect to get out of this? Come, brace up. We must agree on some idea—sh! What's that?"

There came voices from the alley and the sound of heavy

feet on the threshold, then loud and protracted knocking, followed by a creaking and groaning of wood, as though strong shoulders were at the door.

The burglars glanced at each other with misting eyes and paling cheeks. Larue raised his finger cautiously and compressed his lips. The scout set his hat over the lamp and in the darkness neither breathed.

The attack on the door continued and a voice cried: "Hello, inside there. Open the door."

There was a pause; then more knocking and another pause,

Conversation in lower but distinct tones ensued. "What's this, anyway?" "Why, its Jack Larue's. He's a very likely party." "Here, some one go round to the front and look." "I've been there and there's nothing but the light over the bar. You can see clean through and nobody's in." "He lives up-stairs, though." "Bang away at the door again." "Hello, hello, up there." There is no response. "We're losing good time and there's many a more likely. Larue's been on his q's since he got into business." "Yes, I understand that he's dropped his old tricks. How's that, Cormack?" "So I hear, but I don't know about it. He's not likely in this, though. Give the door another heave anyway."

The heave is given, but the planks and bolts are stubborn.

"This'll never do. It'll take tools to get in here and two to one there's nobody in."

"There ain't enough in it. I say I've been a bit down the alley. They're up at old Rube's. The light is shining

out of every chink and the place is full. There's a bag, sure."

"You bet, and a dozen good places right along here.'

As the foot-falls swiftly retired the scout restored his hat to his head, Larue dropped his hand to his side, and they comtemplated each other for some time in silence.

"Well, here's to the man that made that door," cried the scout, starting forward at last with a laugh and drawing heartily at the bottle.

When the scout finished, with a long breath, Larue glanced with a smile at his right hand, giving it a toss as though to cast off some stain thereon, and drank until the bottle was empty.

"I've got $150 here," he said after awhile. "I'll give you $100 of it. It's enough to get you out and I owe you that much, anyway. Take it!"

"If you'd only agreed to pocket some of the sparks! But, no, you wouldn't have it that way. Well, this is your job, but I'm mighty sorry that its my neck too to save," remarked the scout, gathering the money.

"For God's sake, let up on me?" cried Larue, peevishly. "Don't I know it? Enough's said."

The scout beat softly on the floor with his boot and then ventured slowly. "There's another thing about this. Don't it strike you that McMasters would give me a ticket-of-leave for the rest of my days if I'd squeal in the case? You likely killed that cop. He fell mighty like it."

If looks could slay the scout would have met judgment the next moment, for there was murder uttered in the eyes

that met his speech. So plain was it that his cool assurance forsook him and he fell back from the table.

"If I thought for a minute that you thought of such a trick you'd never move from your chair alive," said Larue, slowly and tremulously.

"Now, come," protested the scout, "I'm not thinking of it. I was just saying, you see."

"But that's mighty ugly talk and it ain't the right kind just at this time. I'll take it as you say, though, that you don't mean it. Now, how about you getting away?"

"I believe I couldn't do better than to make a break right now," replied Minton. "By crawling and hugging the shade and keeping out of company I think I can get clear of the town before daylight. I believe anyway that there's better hiding this bad night out-doors than inside while the excitement's on."

"I wouldn't be surprised but you're right, and come to think of it, take this other fifty," replied Larue.

The scout took it promptly with a covert smile, and rising said: "Right on the heels of the chase I believe it safest to get out the door, and once out I'm all right."

"Well, risk it, and here's good luck to you. Leave the light to me. Here's mine, stick it in your pocket. In the course of a month or so if we pull out of this we'll hear from each other and fix for better luck next time. Remember me when you know it's in my line to be of use to you. Well, here's a good-bye to you."

Larue finished his words at the door, which he noiselessly

opened and closed as the scout, with a whispered "So long," dropped out and vanished.

Returning to the stall Jack seated himself and vexedly upturned the empty bottle. After a time he arose and with the bottle in his hand walked to the end of the lunch-counter and lifting a trap lid in the floor descended to the cellar in the utter dark. His share in a quart of whiskey had put his nerves in armor, and he was gaining such complacence that he recognized the phosphenes that floated before his alcoholic vision to be natural phenomena and never apprehended for a minute that the noise of rats among the barrels and boxes could have been of other cause. Still guarding the dust upon the bottle and guided by touch he filled it from a cask as he had many times before.

Again in the stall he drank and fell a'musing. He desired to reflect and project. He found, however, that his mind could shape no tangible form of thought, and he drank again. He was not perturbed, yet he lacked composure. He tried the effect of another drink. It was unavailing. He would pinch his brows, knock with his knuckles upon his head, and softly word over some premises of deduction.

"I'm rattled," he would say, uneasily, and would then lean back, tightly cross his outstretched legs, cover his eyes, putting himself as it were on the rack.

"I've killed a man, to begin with," he drawled; "that's pretty near sure. Anyway I've broken a house and cracked a safe, that's positive. Let me see what's to cover. What tracks did we leave? Ah, curse it, I can't quite remember anything. I couldn't put two and two together to make

four. What's the infernal matter with me? I was awfully shook up, true enough. I'll try another drink; that may touch the spot."

He reached for the bottle, and his extending hand trembled and groped deviously. His sight seemed thick and his brain careened.

"Drink!" he cried, pushing himself violently from the table. "Another drink, ha, ha! Why, I'm drunk now. I'll go to bed and think to-morrow."

Thus in his critical hour had Larue yielded to that delusion which has been the snare of many a vital plan and many a worthy purpose. He had sought in drink a spur to his senses only to find a curb, and where he had thought to gain stimulus he had drawn upon him an apathy from which he could not struggle free. He must now rest upon the fatal abeyance of another day. He arose and, neglecting the light, staggered out of the stall. He was besotted, maudlin drunk, and laughed at his many missteps with idiotic complacency as he made his way to the stairs. These he ascended in the most laborious fashion, and he succeeded in opening the door at the top only at the close peril of a fall. He found his room door ajar and the chamber dark. Cursing the absence of light he groped to the stand on which the lamp stood and with great difficulty lighted the wick and replaced the funnel.

It was with something of a shock to his drunken senses that as the light sprang up and he turned about he beheld Bess sitting bolt upright in a chair near the window with her mutilated face unbandaged and her one eye scrutinizing

him narrowly. She wore her house-dress and seemed in no way indisposed save for her bruised face, but there was that about her—exclusive of the uncanny manner in which she had been revealed from the dark—that Jack was not too drunk to feel.

"What's er matter?" he asked sharply, rocking to and fro; "what're you doin' there?"

"I'm waiting for you, Jack," she replied simply, but with some hidden meaning in her tone.

An upright attitude had become unbearable to Larue and he staggered to the bed and sat on its edge.

"Waitin' for me! That's good, too. Why'n'y you go to bed and wait, eh?"

"I've spent too much time in bed for you to-day already, Jack."

"So?" he hiccoughed with a laugh.

"Yes, so," she cried savagely, springing from the chair and advancing to the center of the room, "and it's the last time I'll do it."

"Goin' to run away, well, well," he chuckled, and as if the matter was of no further consequence he threw off his mud-stained coat and vest, tossing them from him over the foot of the bed. His pistol fell out of the coat pocket and struck the floor with a hard sound. The woman's eyes moved toward it. Extending his leg he said to her: "Pull off my boot."

"Pull off your boot, Jack Larue," she replied passionately. "I will die before I ever touch you in service or kindness again."

"I'll put crape on your other eye if you don't pull off that boot," he said, menacingly.

"It's no time for you to talk about what you will do to me," she replied, drawing herself up to full height. "This is your death hour, Jack Larue." And from the folds of her dress she drew a long knife with a blade polished and thin that played and turned in the light, as she raised it, like a pale flame.

Larue dropped his foot and leaning back, supported by his elbows on the bed, stared at her aghast.

"Put up that knife," he cried, nervously.

She laughed.

"Great God," he thought, "she's crazy and she will kill me while I sit here unarmed and helpless drunk."

His mind ranged wildly over the field of expedients. He endeavored to sober himself by strength of will, but his entire morale was gone.

"Yes, Jack, I have repaid you with my soul for all that was good I got from you," she said. "I want your life for the inhuman wrong you have done me."

She was more calm and lowered the knife. Yet she seemed no less fixed in purpose and appeared to bide a time that lay within her plans.

Despairing of effort in his defense Larue fell to cunning.

"Let me see that knife," he said persuasively and with a leer, "I don't believe it will cut."

"Have you got anything to tell before you die, Jack? Have you got any scores against you that ought to be settled? Do you leave any wrong the righting of which

will make you rest easier? I don't begrudge you a fair chance in the next world. Come, speak quick."

Her manner was appallingly calm.

"But let me see the knife. You ain't holding it right," he replied with a fumbling show of good humor.

"Answer me," she commanded.

"Give me the knife," he whined.

"Answer me."

She held the knife upraised again, the point poised above him. He winced as he glanced at it, then made a scuffling effort to rise, but finding that he could not hold his feet he fell back with a thick laugh.

"Say, come," he coaxed. I'm willing to be killed, but kill me right. Let me show you how to hold the knife. I'll give it right back to you. Don't catch it in that ten-cent tragedy way, but hold it like this"—he illustrated the method with his clinched hand, seizing the imaginary knife as one would grasp a sword—"and thrust and lunge and rip. Why, you could only prod and hack that way. I've used knives, but that's a secret. Won't you let me show you?"

His wheedling ruse was pitiable.

"You black-hearted, miserable coward," she laughed aloud. "Now for your last chance—have you got anything to say?"

He cast about him hopelessly with his heavy eyes. His clouded intellect was weakening under the strain. Consciousness was sustained with the severest stress of effort.

"Oh, drop this now," he snarled, "an' go to bed! You're crazy."

"That's where you're right for once," she cried with a ringing laugh. "I am crazy. You made me crazy and here's what you get for your work."

Lowering her head and extending her left hand before her she rushed upon him. She fastened her fingers in his hair; he grappled her about the neck. She forced him back, rose over him, and with her disengaged hand struck at him. There was a darting gleam with the blow and the hideous cry that escaped Larue came as prompt as the report succeeds the rifle's flash.

The knife had pierced his heart.

She freed herself from his clutch and backed away

He lay across the bed, growing ghastly. When his rattling breath ceased to come presently his clinched jaws gaped and his closed lids lifted.

Jack Larue had met the wretched end that his path of of life by natural result attained. It had been deferred for him an unusual length and that it came at last through the frantic wrath of an insane woman was to merely forestall the gunshot or the halter or the rot of the life cell.

Bess had crouched at the bedside watching the death agony. When it was over she became conscious for the first time of a rapid rapping upon the door and a clamoring voice.

She turned with swift action and ferocious mien toward the door. Then she recognized the voice, and with a sigh

rose erect and brushed her hair back from her perspiring brow.

"Ah, a little more strength and composure for it. Then come the mad-house, the prison, or the grave," she murmured.

"Oh, open the door, Jack! Bess! What's the matter? came the voice from without. It was Hackles' voice, deeply stirred with alarm, and he beat upon the door.

"Harry!" called Bess through the panel.

"Oh, Bess! Is that you? I'm so glad! I thought you were—Oh, what made that awful noise? What's Jack doin'? Let me in; I'm nearly scared to death out here," Hackles cried.

"Never mind," she said in reassuring tones. "Go back to your room and dress, quick. I'll be out to you in a minute. Hurry; hurry, there's no time to lose."

Immediate silence in the hall, indicating that her injunction was being met with dispatch; she hurried on garments serviceable for the street, donned hat and cloak, and veiled her face. Lifting Larue's vest she took out his watch and in the back case found a paper which she thrust in her glove. She extinguished the lamp, and with one passionless glance at the corpse went out. She waved Hackles, who was waiting for her, back from the door and turned the key in the lock.

"Come along," she said urgently to him, and they descended the stairs and made exit by the alley door.

"What's de matter wid Jack?" asked Hackles, anxiously.

"Never mind him, he's asleep," and aside, with a smile, "very sound asleep."

It was in the first gray gleam of dawn. The rain had subsided and the clouds, breaking up like an armada, on the beams of the day, were being driven by a stiff breeze from the path of the sun. Close shadows hovered still within the alley, but when the woman and the boy reached the street they had light.

Bess halted, unfolded the paper, and scanned the writing it bore.

"Do you know where Rupert Square is?" she asked of the boy.

"Yes," he replied with interest. "What number?"

"No. 50. Show me the way. Let's hurry there," she said.

"Why, dat's where I had the fellow arrested. They've got no use for me there," protested Hackles.

"No use for you there, child? You will be the most welcome visitor that house ever had. But come along," she urged.

Without further ado, but still wondering, Hackles guided the way, and they sped down the slowly-lighting streets.

CHAPTER XVI.

INQUISITORIAL MERCIES.

It came daybreak, too, in the alley behind the plundered jewelry store, where Tom Chase had fallen and whence went forth a night's activity for the police department. In that black crevice, as well as elsewhere, the storm ceased with the dawn, but what with the shadows of masonry and the reeking of the roofs, both seemed slower there.

The city's day began in the shipping, and the tugs that had cruised the outer harbor through the night clustered in the river's mouth with their convoys, huskily summoning the bridges to draw. Bells began to ring, some slow and bass, others brisk and high-keyed. A multitude of shrieks came up from the railroad yards as traffic there caught a fresh impetus, and thousands of factory fires, banked for the night, were stirred and quickened until their distillations rose and flowed in the route of the clouds.

When the light had waxed sufficiently for his purpose, Kinnane set about the project he had conceived from the presence of the burglars' horse. The invaded premises were now in the charge of their proper occupants, who

surveyed the damaging relics with an excitement and anxiety that was perfectly natural.

Kinnane dismissed his posse with such reports as he desired conveyed, and received information of the bootless results of the search up to the moment with a degree of composure and satisfaction that rather surprised the officer bearing the news. He mounted then to the wagon seat, clucked up the horse and drove directly out of the alley. At the exit he dropped the reins to a loose hold that exercised neither restraint nor guidance upon the horse. The weary animal moved slowly into the street, and swaying in a way that may have indicated its perturbation in obtaining no direction from the driver, swerved slowly to the westward, and finding its voluntary course unchecked picked up a smart pace. At the first intersecting thoroughfare the horse again hesitated, and as no advising stress was laid upon the rein it chose again for itself and clattered away northward. The route was now along one of the great retail trading streets, hemmed by hugh buildings, that were perfect hives of industry from their basements to their topmost lofts. The shop-keeper found his realm here on the street floors, and except where grand magazines filled all the floors, the upper windows were gilt-lettered with the signs of twenty enterprises in one house. The scene was now under the dominion of the janitor and chore-boy. Doors rattled and slammed open successively, shutters came down with a clang, windows were flung up, the decorations and stock exhibits were brought forth to their daily post of prominence, and the entire line of house fronts were

changing aspect with the magical effect, as a whole, of a dissolving view. Broom and brush held veritable sway and everything was looking up to a better appearance ere long.

The horse jogged on, passing a great hotel, where through the yawning doors could be seen within the amazons of the mop and swab lathering and rubbing the tiled floor, wringing their soaking cloths and plying their arduous task with a muscular energy more than masculine. Other establishments in this same disagreeable, slop-bucket condition were passed as the horse jogged on. Dust and suds were everywhere fastening their miserable imprint upon the wretched rising hour.

Amid this activity a great movement was gaining way upon the street. The reflux of the evening ebb, that Larue had comtemplated from his door, was coming in with the same panoramic effect. That centralization of brain and brawn which made up the great city's commercial energies was beginning, collecting its elements from near and far on every hand. The tin-pail brigade of labor's army came first like skirmish clouds, trudging in a motley of race and nation as it had gone out. Behind this hardy van hundreds of converging columns were moving with a speed and precision that grew from intimacy with the ground.

Grand legions were rallying upon this field of stone and iron and another stupendous battle in the unending war was impending. Yet the hosts, pouring in by file and platoon, came with neither equipage nor armament. No banners marked the advance; no drum-beats measured the

tread of ranks; no bugles sang the war hymn, but the awakening battle was to be as serious, as full of casualty and death as any fought amid the fire and shot and sabre-stroke of martial conflict. The serious business, the hopes and fears of triumph and defeat, were plainly avowed in the faces of the troops, both veteran and recruit, and the fight would be waged with that earnestness which wins or meets destruction upon the enemy's parapet.

The horse went pegging along, meanwhile, doubtless puzzling its poor old wits at its unusual liberty and resolving to improve the situation, just as its strange driver shrewdly purposed, by making as near an air-line trip as possible to the manger. Whisk, with a smart flirt of its tail, the horse made a perilous short turn to the westward again. Here Kinnane was for the first time compelled to draw up the rein for emergencies, as the street, being a market, was already crowded with all manner of wagons, carts, trucks, and drays, and the passage had to be deviously picked. A great commotion was in progress here amid the crashing of boxes and barrels, and the cries of myriads of captive fowls that shook out their rumpled plumage and gave their lungs a morning exercise despite their crowded quarters. There are those who see the crown of optimism in pot-fated rooster crowing in a crate. And true enough, if the world of men took to its woes with the same philosophy, many uncomfortable things that come in the way of nature and can not be helped would be met more graciously. So, while the fussy ducks straddle about and quack their vexation, and the foolish geese shrilly declaim against their

discomfort, let the cheerful chanticleer enjoy his matinade, even though it be his last.

At the next turn, which was once more northward, Kinnane was compelled to pull up to a halt. A bridge which spans the afore-mentioned lagoon that trisects the city, was open for the passage of a long line of vessels. On the opposite bank one of the inbound columns of hurrying laborers was rapidly grouping in a baffled and impatient throng. For fifteen minutes counter processions of tugs, schooners, steamers and scows crept through the slips. When at last the bridge swung shut the crowd swarmed aboard like pirates upon a dismantled prize and rushed across in frantic efforts to make up time lost. The horse promptly dropped into place in the file of vehicles and passed over.

Due north the course now lay for two miles, through an avenue of small shops and lodgings, which ceased at last at a broad, green park, and the horse, as though shying at the solemn-featured bronze of Lincoln that stands warder of the way, turned abruptly westward. More than a mile the path pursued lay straightway. The area of pretentious building, even of modest comfort was left behind. Nothing met the eye save of the severest stamp of utility. Railway tracks were crossed with a series of teeth-loosening jolts; gas-works gave a momentary check to respiration; great distilleries, with their vast pens of swill-fed cattle, steamed foully in the morning air; foundries, mills, and manufactories were passed as the route led over a canal, through a string of dirty shipping, traversing an island, and finally crossing an

arm of the all-pervading river, and the journey was pushed into the west side. The patience of the man was equal to the perseverance of the beast. Neither complained of the weariness that grew upon them both. Here were the bivouacs of the poor—verdureless and colorless—lying puddled and drenched from the recent storm. Through a miry street into a filthy alley the horse forged, and stopped at length with a great, vaporous sigh at a door that covered askew the entrance to a low-roofed, ill-kept stable.

Allowing a pause sufficient to satisfy him that the beast had reached a permanent halt, Kinnane stepped down and proceeded to a survey of the surroundings. He easily opened the door, and, forcing back the horse, which eagerly essayed to follow, he entered the stable. It was the merest shell, almost as wet within as without, and contained but one rude manger and scant space for the storage of a wagon. Kinnane passed into the yard, a small, bare inclosure littered with tin cans and strung with knotted and sagging clothes-lines. The house on the premises, an unpainted frame cottage, was scarcely a better shelter than the barn. The total aspect of indigence was deepened by the evident negligence and willing squalor of the occupants. These persons, as became their shiftless state, were still abed. Before proceeding farther, Kinnane, in grateful recognition of his dumb coadjutor's services, took the horse out of its harness and stabled it. Throwing a measure of oats into the box and filling the manger with the best of the sparse store of hay, he left the hungry beast to founder on this unusual plenty and advanced upon the house.

He knocked at the rear door, eliciting at once a gruff and snort-like challenge from within.

The heavy fall of bare feet and a scuffle of clothing ended, after a time, in the appearance at the door of an evil-visaged, thin-bearded, stooped and mean-figured man, who, with heavy, though anxious eyes, took swift measure of his visitor.

"Hello! Who are you and what do you want?" he said at once; then, with a leer, adding: "Jim Kinnane, I know you. What's the matter?"

"Rulison, eh?" remarked the officer, recognizing the man. "What are you doing here?"

"Livin' here. But what's the matter?"

"So, you are living here? Well, well. Some time since I've seen you," said Kinnane, commentatively.

"Yes, livin' here with my family, and that I ain't seen you needn't give you no worry. Can't a man live honest?" the man retorted.

"Oh, yes, a man can live honest enough, and I'm glad you're doing it. But I want you to go down to Central for a minute or so this morning."

"What for?" sharply demanded the man.

"For no great shakes, but I want to talk to you awhile," lightly replied Kinnane.

"Then talk here."

"No."

The man thought he saw no appeal from that one short word and the shake of the head, though both were mild. Their significance lay in a knowledge of their source.

"I ain't had nothin' to eat," he protested.

"Never mind, I'll get you something," replied Kinnane.

"But the woman and the two kids. There's nothin' in the house; she's drunk and they'll be hungry," and he glanced worriedly over his shoulder.

"Don't bother about them; they can rustle. They've had to forage many a spell before while you were away from home. So wake up there and get on your clothes without any more talk."

Kinnane pushed the man into the house, and himself entered to keep his captive in sight. The interior was miserable in the extreme. A cracked and red-rusted stove, perched on little pillars of brick-bats, with a few battered and blackened utensils, stood like the altar of desolation in one corner. Against the wall on the farther side lay a bedstead indifferent to its legless state. Upon the frame, in a rat's-nest of dirty quilts and blankets, a swollen and greasy faced woman sprawled and snored. Pressed close to the wall by her bulk, a boy and a girl, mere babies, literally locked in each other's arms for economy of space, presented two grimy little faces serene in slumber. From the vacant strip left at the outer edge the man had evidently just arisen. Nothing, from the bare and unswept floor to the blotched and dingy ceiling, was wanting to complete the pauper picture.

Rulison went about the room assorting his own garments from scattered heaps of rags and fitting them to his person with that ease and dispatch their shapelessness made possible. He then washed his face in a bucket of water and dried himself with a corner of the bed cover, whereupon he

was dressed. In leaving the house he turned to Kinnane and said, with a troubled look: "I've got a plug in the barn and I ought to feed it before goin'."

"Very well; we'll go out the back way, then," replied Kinnane, with a smile and a sharp study of his too evidently perturbed companion.

Entering the stable, Rulison swiftly and anxiously took in the evidence of recent attention. The situation was apparent. With that trapped and guilty look, best characterized as "a sickly grin," he glanced at Kinnane and said, "That's all. Let's go."

Kinnane ventured no remark, and if he hoped that Rulison would himself lead out he was disappointed, for the man settled into deep reflection and the journey by horse-car to the central station passed in silence between them.

Directly to the quarters of the detective department, which we have already visited, the officer led his man. The wicketed door opened and received them, beyond which the world could but conjecture their further procedure. We have already witnessed the business of the police in a few of its features, and arrive now at a matter which is the very essence of detective methods, a secret of secrets, persistently denied and impossible of proof. It is denied as the best answer to adverse criticism and is not provable, as there are only two witnesses, the one a criminal (or at best uncorroborated), who may affirm, and the other a commissioned officer of the law who, as has been said, denies. The subject at issue is the interrogation of prisoners by the police, a process odiously termed "sweat-boxing."

An extraordinary activity pervaded the department this morning. The commanding officers, apprised of the events of the night, were on hand at an unusually early season. Both relays of the force were on duty; the drag-net was still at work; reports of progress were pouring in by wire and messengers. Nothing satisfactory; nothing that bore surface indication of promise had been received, and direct measures were in abeyance to developments.

In a closet-like recess of the last of the three rooms a small door communicated to a narrow, spiral stair that descended to a vault of cells. This lock-up is almost inhumanely obscure. It is a mere crypt in the huge buttresses of the foundation, partitioned into coffin-like cells by heavy sheets of iron. A solitary gas-jet affords the feeble allowance of light, and ventilation is a luxury the builder thought sufficiently supplied by the chance usages of the upper door. This dungeon is reserved for the most intensely secret purposes of the department, and, although not regularly employed for prolonged imprisonment, it is known to possess all the virtues of the olden oubliette to reduce obduracy.

The little door had this morning admitted a half-dozen handcuffed men who had been snatched from patrol wagons, hustled in from the street, and literally thrown down the narrow stairs. Everything was done with speed and little patience, pardonable, perhaps, by the urgency of the case. As each man took the plunge a moment's silence ensued, and a sound of violence, choked as in the hollow of the tomb, could, with the favor of absolute silence, have then been heard above.

On the moment that Kinnane entered with his charge the little door burst open and McMasters, flushed, soiled, and excited, strode hotly forth. He wore neither hat nor coat; his shirt sleeves were rolled up to his elbows, his shoes and trousers were splashed with water, and his hands, knotted with exertion, were abraded and blood-marked at the knuckles. He swore copiously in a strain that betokened rage, disappointment, and deep desire. Halting before the new arrivals he made a nervous clutch at Rulison as though to seize and finish him while in the heat for it, but Kinnane interposed, saying quietly: "It's better to talk to him a bit."

"Talk!" shouted McMasters, "I've talked till I'm played out. I'm trying other tactics. This is a little the worst I ever saw. Look at my hands from skull-thumping, and I've used the hose till I had to swim out. What's in this duck?"

"There's plenty," significantly replied Kinnane.

"Well, we'll try him." McMasters turned on the prisoner in unmistakeable tones. "I want you to understand that my patience is about so long," and the lieutenant thrust his fore-finger, with its length marked off by his thumb to the first joint, under Rulison's nose.

McMasters led the way to his private office. Rulison, at a sign from Kinnane, followed with clouded looks, confident, even cognizant from experience, of what betided. Kinnane likewise entered, closing the door behind him. The room was spacious and lighted by two broad, deep-set windows of huge plate panes through which the sight and sounds of the street were freely admitted. Being flush with the ground, the interior was open to the glance of those among the

throngs upon the walk who cared to look in as they passed. The windows had curtains that rolled at the bottom and these McMasters, as though acting upon a casual and unimportant impulse, lifted to the height of his eyes. This action scarcely diminished the supply of light but with it the street from the interior and the interior from the street could not be seen. Kinnane directed Rulison to a chair in a far corner, and joined his superior at the latter's desk. Seated closely together the two carried on a conversation in undertones.

It became Kinnane's duty to acquaint the lieutenant with the situation as he had resolved it, and the matters required of the prisoner. The officer did so simply, without resort to any of the dramatic periods which other natures would have wrought from the story, for that which Kinnane communicated had its sensational parts and seemed to be the bud of a tremendous police cause.

The burglars, he informed McMasters, had left a horse and wagon by which they meant to remove their booty. Relying upon the animal's instincts to bear its empty stomach home, he had set it adrift and had located its ownership upon the man then in custody. This man was Thomas Rulison, a former thief of petty practice, and receiver of stolen goods, who had done numerous brief penal terms. It had been more than a year since the fellow had been in transgression of the law. He was miserably poor, living with his family, and possessed, by means and for purposes unknown, of the said horse, equally ill-faring as he. The man had not yet been questioned and was virgin for the

"pump." Retracing the course of his statement to the search in the alley, Kinnane exhibited the Russia pocket-book, and, without any of that impressment which in the gravity of the circumstances might have been pardonable, he exposed the papers within the book which fastened its ownership upon Henry T. Jarvis, and recalled to the lieutenant's mind the significant letter from the Philadelphia police. He added the incident of the police court, which had brought Mr. Jarvis under his observation, and located that gentleman's quarters in the elegant precincts of Rupert Square. Before starting with the horse, Kinnane had detailed his colleague, Moore, to watch the Jarvis residence and keep the person of the subject, if he ventured out, under rigid surveillance, but to take no decisive step until further advised.

As the officer progressed in his report the lieutenant made no effort to conceal his pleasure at the method and result of the work. It was certain in his mind that "the mysterious Mr. Jarvis" had shown his criminal hand. McMasters was hotly eager to develop the rich mine opening to view. It only remained to involve the wily and pretentious knave in the mesh of conviction "beyond a reasonable doubt." One party to the crime was unquestionably found in Rulison, and he must contribute to, if not complete, the sum of evidence.

McMasters arose and approached the prisoner with the demand in a frank and airy manner: "Rulison, what do you do for a living?"

The man, who had sat darkly scrutinizing the two detec-

tives, straightened up, crossed his legs, and scratching his wire-bearded chin, affected an easy and good-tempered manner, as he replied: "Oh, I do expressin' and odd jobs."

"You own a horse, don't you?"

"Yes, a kind of one," with an apologetic shrug.

"Now come to the point, and keep in mind what I said about my patience," continued McMasters. "Where were you with your horse and wagon last night?"

"I wasn't out of the house—"

"Well, my friend, it's too bad, but I see you are about to begin lying to me," and McMasters shook his head with affective pity, and plunged his hands deep into his pockets.

"If you'll let me get through we'll understand each other better," protested Rulison. "Now, though I say I wasn't out of the house last night I don't say my horse wasn't, because it was. I rented the horse and wagon out to a party that was goin' a-fishin', and I jes' happen to have witnesses to that fact from my neighbors. And I want to say what is more, that if anything wrong happened in connection with that horse I don't know nothin' about it and kin prove it."

"I'm afraid that you're a little too well fixed with witnesses and too ready to prove things for your own good, Rulison," sadly replied McMasters. "But I'll take you on your own ground. Who was the party you rented your horse to?"

"I don't know his name. He was decent looking and agreed to pay me ten dollars, five dollars down and five dollars to come. Hold on, don't stop me! I gave part of the five

dollars to my wife and she got drunk on it, and the rest I spent for beer and lost at poker, which I played in Pat Hoover's saloon, where I staid and played till after one o'clock, which I kin prove; and what's more and ought to end the whole business with me, I met Officer Cal Layman, who belongs up Rawson street way, on the corner 'most in front of my house on my way home and I talked with him for more'n fifteen minutes, which makes it a good half-past one before I got out of sight of witnesses. What more do you want?"

"If you will let me ask the questions and confine yourself to answering them this thing will be pleasanter," tartly rejoined McMasters. "Come, now, who was the party that rented the horse?"

"Honest, just as I said, I don't know," solemnly asserted Rulison.

"How many prior convictions against you?" coldly asked McMasters. "About five, eh? More likely ten. Well, anyway, you're a sure candidate for life under the habitual criminal act and don't you know that I've got two or three good cases in which you answer description?" Don't you or do you know it, eh? Now, like a good fellow, tell me the party."

"For God's sake, lieutenant," cried Rulison with a show of alarm, "don't do anything wrong. You're mistaken about me. I know you think I know something, but, before my Maker, I don't; and as for the party who rented the horse I never saw him before and I don't know his name."

"This ends it," menacingly said McMasters. "Now, I

don't care anything about your rent story, but I want the name of the man who, with or without you, had that horse. This is business and not child's play. I give you just one holy minute to speak up."

"This is terrible on a man," whined Rulison. "But I don't know nothing about what you want."

"You tell me that again and I'll give you a knock on the jaw that you'll not forget in a hurry."

"I can't help it," was the dejected reply.

At this the lieutenant jerked Rulison to his feet by his beard. The wretch gave an open-mouthed cry of pain and dismay, but recovered to meet the reiterated query with the dogged reply: "Killin' me wouldn't do no good."

His tongue had not left the utterance ere a smashing blow in the face from McMasters sent him to the floor. He started to rise, whimpering, but the lieutenant stood over him.

"What do you say now? (A kick in the ribs.) Have you changed your mind? (An open-handed blow that drove his head against the floor.) Do you know now?" (A thumb-gouge under the point of the jaw.)

Knocked down as rapidly as he sought to rise, kicked and beaten, the wretched man crawled and rolled about, foaming and howling like a beast. Endurance at last reached its limit and he shouted: "Let up! I'll tell!"

"Tell quick, then," cried McMasters, stepping back.

"It was Bill Thomes that rented the horse," answered the man, huskily, as he staggered to his feet.

McMasters and Kinnane exchanged quick glances of

inquiry. The latter half-closed his eyes and nodded his head, as though to say: "Surprising, but none the less eminently probable."

Turning to Rulison, McMasters said impressively: "As you expect to save yourself from the penitentiary, is that right?"

"It's dead right, and, for God's sake, ain't that enough?" snarled the man, groping lamely to a seat.

A knock interrupting at this moment, the lieutenant opened the door. An officer, hat in hand, said: "Jack Larue's knifed to death over his saloon and his woman and boy can't be found. He hasn't been moved, and the captain below says that he'd like to have you hurry and take a look at the case. The captain thinks that it's growing out of the killing of Tom Chase. I brought this note up from the armory for Kinnane, who, the clerk says, is with you," and the officer delivered a sealed letter, which Kinnane opened and read.

"A woman and a boy went into the house about daylight, and they are still on the inside. So is our man. Am still here. MOORE."

"By gracious," exclaimed McMasters, when he too had read the note, "that satisfies me. Bring Jarvis in, if it costs a leg. Send this fool for the present to the booby-hatch. I'm off for Larue's. You bring in 'The Mysterious,' and I'll do the rest. Fetch him within an hour, if possible."

Consigning the bruised and limping Rulison to the basement cell, McMasters called two of his men and hurried out. Kinnane had already gone.

CHAPTER XVII.

"THE MYSTERIOUS" MR. JARVIS.

THE case was closing. To the police would belong the double credit of success and promptitude. A criminal mystery of scarce half a day was solved and the culprits in hand. Kinnane was sure of it, and it was with some elation in his grim way that he seized a cab with directions to Rupert Square. There was good prima facie evidence of Mr. Jarvis' participation in the burglary and attendant murder, and there need be no pause upon the order of his immediate arrest.

Kinnane halted his cab on the main avenue where it was screened from the houses of Rupert Square by the foliage of the park. He moved toward the south entrance, where he beheld Moore peering at intervals through the shrubbery which here thinly veiled him from No. 50. A brief colloquy ensued, the result of which was that Moore should post himself at the rear, alert for the call of help or attempted flight, and that Kinnane should enter by the front and make the seizure.

Kinnane passed through the gate, crossed the drive, and sprung the bell at the door of No. 50. Its muffled summons returned to his ear from below. A slow, soft step upon the

brussels-padded hallway presently reached him, and the door opened to disclose Eliza's comfortable figure and inquiring face.

"Mr. Jarvis is in," she said in reply to the detective's demand. "Who wishes to see him?"

"Tell him 'a friend,'" said Kinnane, and, firmly forcing his way within, he said: "I will wait here."

Eliza, with apprehensions aroused by the visitor's stern obtrusiveness, bent her steps with some anxiety to the call of Mr. Jarvis.

An instant thereafter Mr. Jarvis appeared in the hall from the rear parlor. His face shown blithely and he advanced with a brisk step.

"Well, sir, what is your business?" he inquired, genially.

"I am a police officer, sir," said Kinnane simply, "and want you to go with me to the Central."

"Let me see," he said breezily, "I promised to kill the first damned policeman that called, after my last visit. What do you scoundrels mean by pursuing me?"

"Don't make any speeches but come right along, or I'll collar you," sneered Kinnane.

"Your insolence becomes you. You are no better, no worse than your kind. Did you hear me say that I am pledged to kill you," Jarvis was smiling broadly—the first smile to which his lips had played in many a year. A familiar friend would have been terrified; Kinnane, too, thought he saw some ruse to defeat him. He advanced.

"But," Jarvis interposed, "I have changed my mind and

I'll not kill you. Not only that I will go with you my good fellow, and explain away your doubt."

Kinnane could not understand his man, nor could one of even life-long acquaintance have understood Mr. Jarvis' strange demeanor that morning. Kinnane disposed his pistol and manacles more ready to hand within his pockets as Jarvis lifted his hat from the hall-rack and he seized his prisoner's arm as they stepped out together.

"That's right, take my arm," said Mr. Jarvis cheerily, "It looks more companionable and may disarm comment. What's that—"

Kinnane blew a whistle. Moore hurried around from the rear of the house.

"Pull the box for the wagon," ordered Kinnane.

"O, don't do that," protested Mr. Jarvis, although he laughed. "Don't bring your noisy truck here. You will compromise me with my neighbors."

"You'll have less particular neighbors before long," rejoined Kinnane.

"So you have me convicted already. Well have your own way. I am in such good nature this morning that I will submit to almost anything. But you might let me call a carriage," Mr. Jarvis went on, good humoredly.

"The wagon is plenty good enough for the likes of you," savagely retorted Kinnane.

Eliza had come to the door, and to her Mr. Jarvis said: "I will be back in an hour. Make my visitors at home. Keep the woman in the house at all costs if she awakens. That's all."

The wagon rolled into the driveway, backed up to the curb and, after Mr. Jarvis had mounted with the two officers, whipped out at the north gate, having paraded the front of the fifty houses.

Rupert Square stood horror-stricken at its doors.

The clothing he had last worn, the pistol and the mud upon them inspired the conjecture at once that Larue had been a party to the burglary. As soon as Kinnane was informed of this he needed no second thought to identify Larue's missing wife and son with the woman and boy that Moore had seen to enter the Jarvis residence. Rupert Square was at once re-visited and No. 50 raided in force. Bess was found abed in a deep narcotic sleep, by which Mr. Jarvis had persuaded her to mend her hysteria. Hackles was in the kitchen effecting a truce with Thomas who had not forgotton the episode of the sparrow. Woman and boy were routed out and loaded into the patrol wagon.

Thomas and Eliza were left in the opinion that the end of the world was at hand. The language has no measure now for the feelings of the good people of Rupert Square. Mrs. Tierce's strength broke under the strain and she went to bed with such an "attack" that Constance was infected and raved till the doctors came. It was terrible to No. 49 to reflect that but one thin wall had opposed between itself and the den of robbers and murderers which had flourished for months in No. 50. It was an awful reflection, too, for the whole of the square—awful!

In the afternoon a solemn group assembled in McMasters' private office. The chief of police in uniform and dignity

was there. The lieutenant himself in his most savage mien was there. Kinnane was there, stern and still. Rulison, expressionless and dull, was there. A member of the State's Attorney's staff and a lawyer in private practice was there. Mr. Jarvis, Bess and Hackles, too, were there.

Mr. Jarvis' request for legal counsel had at once been granted, and an old and reputable lawyer of his ancient acquaintance was called. It was at the conclusion of a long and hushed conference between Jarvis and his attorney that the group gathered in McMasters' office.

The lawyer had been writing at great length from Mr. Jarvis' dictation and held in his hand the manuscript. He was the first, as by prior understanding with the police officials, to introduce the meeting to the subject for which it was assembled. His manner bore some of the constraint that rested upon all, and, though he meant to appear self-assured and confident, he spoke with measured care.

"I have here," said he, directing attention to the paper in his hand, "Mr. Jarvis' statement, which is meant to answer and satisfy that which you tell me, Mr. Chief, you hope to prove against him. He dictated his statement to me, and I have it here, ready to put in affidavit form if need be. This is a most deplorable matter—a strange, unusual matter—and my gratification is doubly great that my client is enabled so simply and easily to deliver himself from culpable blame. I have here, as I said, his statement, which, while it opens to view an uncommon chapter of life, disarms wholly and promptly all impugnment which an

ignorant observance of his really equivocal conduct may have laid against his integrity. This, gentlemen, covers such of my client's affairs and movements as are necessary to explain away your suspicions." Turning to the light the lawyer read:

"In the city of Philadelphia, state of Pennsylvania, on or about the—th day of June, 18—my son, Charles, then in the fourth year of his age, left my home to play in the neighborhood during the afternoon and never returned. That he was enticed or stolen away was not for a moment to be doubted. The police, all constabulary authorities, and secret agents of every available character for such a purpose were called by me into the search, but through them all no word of the boy has reached me to this day. The boy was my sole surviving child, and the lapse of months and years without tidings of him steadily fed an anxiety and poignant grief that led to his mother's death, and, I confess, has largely affected my life and nature. I expended thousands of dollars in the search and run to earth, regardless of expense, every shadow of a clew. Eight years passed and I had resigned myself to the conviction that my son was dead, for I never believed him in life wholly beyond my reach, when, on a day about a year ago, I was visited by a man who asked me to call next morning at a house in Limping Lane, in one of the lower quarters of the city of Philadelphia. I had been approached in this manner frequently before, and though I was prompt to accept the call, I did so with little hope of profiting by it. I met there, however, an aged woman in the deepest

poverty and distress. She thought then that she was upon her death-bed, but, fortunately for my testimony, still lives, unless she has died within the last few days. She told me, in fear of speedy death and for the peace of her soul, what purported to be the hidden truth attending the abduction of my son. Her name is Catherine Mosher. She had two sons, William and George. They were vagrants and thieves from youth. William and a man named Churley abducted my son. They brought him to her house, reduced him to their condition of rags and dirt, and kept him in close seclusion during the first hue and cry. William Mosher was shot and killed within a week after the abduction while housebreaking in Atlantic City, N. J. Churley was also shot and badly beaten at the same time by the householders. He made a partial confession to my son's abduction, among other crimes of which he sought to free his conscience. I saw him at the time, Whatever hope was offered in the man's, knowledge was blasted by his condition. He was demented. A gunshot wound and a terrible clubbing about the head had produced a disease of the brain. The courts gave the man into my custody and I provided him for three years, in vain, with the world's best treatment. He grew into a settled dulness and more oblivious of the past, so I gave him up. He drifted then for several years about the streets and workhouses.

"The woman continued her revelations. Upon the killing of William, her other son, George, fled with the boy to the West. Within a month she received a letter from Montana stating that George had been sentenced to ten

years in the territorial prison for horse stealing, and that he had left his charge in good hands. That was all she heard of George for nearly eight years, when she received a letter from a committee of citizens, in Cheyenne, Wy., announcing that her son had been hanged and that they made good their promise to forward her his dying expression of love. This was all she knew, and little enough, except that Churley had been to see her once or twice in the last year and seemed brighter. She thought he might be able to divulge some of his long-locked knowledge. It was a small hope, but I set out to find Churley, and from that moment my past year's movements—so unaccountable to my friends and fraught with such violent strain of body and mind—take their date. I had spent more than $100,000 in the hire of detectives. None had brought me so good a clue as I then held. I would have sacrificed twice the original sum, or all I possess in the world, for a successful issue to the quest. But I determined to devote myself personally to the search. Nothing could have been more expensive, as I practically suspended my business. I was growing old. The tenderness of my whole life lay in the past. The past lay in the grave, save that by a chance my lost boy should still live. I had frozen up all acquaintanceship, because I could not bear the approach of friends, yet I suffered deep tortures in my isolation. My loneliness was at once a cell and a scourge. I had grown so sensitive on the subject of my lost boy that I could scarcely admit it to the consideration of others, even in the necessities of the search. I took my servant, Thomas Rawson, along to aid me, because I

meant to be the intelligence of the undertaking and needed only manuel assistance. The search I made for Churley covered nearly a year and took me into associations which laid me open to the suspicion of the police. I was followed and arrested a number of times. I thought this supervisory attitude of the authorities to be unwarranted, but now believe it to have been justifiable. Churley had been wandering in the country, but when found at last afforded information of seeming directness. He was as unsettled of intellect as before, but had taken on a phase of low cunning that shone faintly with intelligence. He told me that my boy was in Chicago. That was all he would say. It may have been all he knew, but no allurements of money, clothing, and comforts would induce the wretch to say more. I captured him and worked upon him with a skillful physician's help for several days, but could get nothing more than the grinning statement, 'Charley Jarvis is in Chicago.' It is a heavy task to search the criminal classes of such a city as Chicago upon so blind a quest, but I had nothing else in life to claim me. I removed here with the utmost quiet, leaving my affairs in competent hands. I had begun work systematically, but had accomplished nothing, until a trifling, and at the time annoying, incident put me in possession of momentous facts. A boy killed a sparrow in the street before my house, and my servant, Thomas, in reproving him struck harder than he thought. Thomas was arrested for the assault. In the police court next morning I was present to give my testimony. My name was caught up by a man who accompanied the boy complainant and who gave

the name of John Larue. He surprised me by proving a knowledge of my son's abduction. I kept an appointment the next day at his saloon, and took steps toward terms with him. He pretended to a positive knowledge of the boy's whereabouts, and promised to produce him almost immediately upon a settlement. He was very guarded in his manner, and placed me partially upon honor, partially upon a sense of fear, not to resort to the police to extort information. I should probably have paid him his price when assured of his fair dealing, and I left him with an engagement to see him on the day following, which was yesterday. However, I was awakened early this morning by my servant's presentation of the urgent request of a woman to see me at the door. I dressed and went down-stairs. The woman was young, perhaps comely, but so dissipated and wounded about the face that clear judgment of her appearance could not be made. She announced herself under the name of Bess Burton, the wife of John Larue, and said she was present to deliver me my stolen son. She was accompanied by a boy, dirty and ill-clad, whom I recognized to be the one whom Thomas had struck. Him she called my son, Charley Jarvis. She and the boy at that time, scarcely past dawn, made an uncouth pair, and I instantly suspected some double dealing. She was in a high-wrought condition—in a seeming ecstasy of grief and joy. I was inclined to have little patience with her story, but determined to examine her. She immediately proclaimed that she had killed John Larue and was even then fresh from his murder. She avowed that it only remained to her to see the boy, to whom she was

attached, returned to his rightful home, and she would at once end her wretched life in the lake. I persuaded her to be seated and restored her to a degree of calmness. She then said that she had been John Larue's confidante and knew the story of the boy well. Larue was in Deadwood, Dak., nine years ago when he got the boy. He was brought to him by George Mosher and left in his care. Sometime before that Mosher and Larue had been implicated in a ruffianly brawl that led to murder, in Philadelphia, and Mosher held that crime before Larue to force him to keep the child awhile. Larue's more settled habits and his association with women made it easy for him to hold a child. Mosher went from the Black Hills over into Montana, and was there sent to the penitentiary, as I have said, for ten years. He adjured Larue to keep the boy, as there was money in him for both as soon as the sentence was served. With allowance of "good time" Mosher left prison a few months ago. Larue had meanwhile moved to Chicago, and had during the last year taken up with Bess Burton, who furnished these facts. Mosher started east and fell in with a teamster, who, traveling alone, took the ex-convict in his wagon nearly 300 miles across the desert from Montana to Cheyenne, Wy. The last night of the journey Mosher killed the teamster with a hatchet, and, taking a sum of money from the dead man, fled. He was caught and lynched in Cheyenne. Larue, who had been informed of Mosher's liberation, made inquiries as time passed without word from him, and within the last week learned of the lynching. He was then free to make his own disposition of the boy, and was

casting about for an expedient, when the boy himself threw the whole solution into his hands. Larue, however, was pledged, with two criminals whom he had brought to town for it, to a burglary, and he carried out his plans. She knew nothing about the result of this crime, as she assassinated him the moment he returned. She had been told by John Larue, as a sort of provision to her advantage should the burglary miscarry and lead to his death or capture, that his ward, my son, the so-called Harry Larue, had a rich father then in the city. He at the time reserved the name, but told her that he would carry it, written upon a slip of paper that night, in the cases of his watch. She found it there upon his death, and by it had been guided to me. She said that the boy had been neglected, save in training as a thief; that he is a pickpocket, and was at times employed by Larue in burglaries. Although positive evidence is wanting, and his nature has been strangely perverted out of the course to which he was born, I accept the identification. My lost boy was utterly without physical mark, but this boy has in complexion, eyes, and hair the family likeness. He is the roughened image of his mother, my dead wife, and I claim him as my son."

This narrative, read by the lawyer in a situation so critical to all, wrought profound effect upon its hearers. There had been few interruptions, and as the revelations began to identify the dirty and ragged boy present with the long-lost Charley Jarvis, there had been a stir of surprise. Mr. Jarvis closed his statement with his little audience under strain

Kinnane was first to speak. He drew from his pocket a red Russia book and asked simply, "Is this yours, sir?"

Mr. Jarvis recognized his property with a very natural puzzle in his looks.

Hackles slipped from his chair, stepped forward and scrutinized the book as it changed hands. Then he said: "I tuk dat leather off'n de gent. I kin prove dat by Hinckey Dink an' Holy Joe."

Every ground of suspicion was met and removed and Mr. Jarvis was unconditionally released. After a few weeks, Bess, in a trial where she had the moneyed assistance of Mr. Jarvis and all public sympathy, was acquitted of murder. Her physical health was so shattered that she lived to partake but little of the new life which Mr. Jarvis and his son in their grateful affection opened to her. She was unable after her trial to leave the city and failed rapidly. One summer day, in the bright front room which Mr. Jarvis had vacated for her in Rupert Square, she lay very feeble. The doctors said that the end was very near. She had been stirring uneasily for some hours half consciously, in that last pathetic struggle of vitality upon the yielding sands of the river's brink. At last she seemed to have found a more certain footing.

"Harry," she said to the boy who knelt at her bedside and sobbed. "Harry," by the name that she alone had known him. Her voice was very low and weak and the effort she made to stroke his hair failed so that he grasped her hand within both of his own and kissed it as he wept.

"We've had a shabby life together. But it's changing

for us both," she said. "You are going to be a gentleman, Harry, and I hope a good and useful man. You'll never forget Bess?"

The boy sobbed wildly, "Oh, no; oh, no!"

"I love to think that I will have a grave—I will have one, won't I, Harry? One kept green and with a little white stone marked for me?"

"O, don't Bess, don't! You shall have everything," the boy cried in torture.

"And sometimes in the pleasant afternoons," she went on, "you will come, even when you have grown to be a great, good man, and sit awhile and think of the old, hard times, and of me."

The boy could not speak in his anguish, and the dying woman continued:

"Harry, my boy, do you remember the sweet lady that used to come in dreams to your bed in the little old cubby-hole across the hall? She's here with me, looking lovingly into my eyes and singing—hush, don't you hear it?—the little rock-a-bye tune. She's singing, oh, so soft, and I'm so sleepy. She is closing the curtains now and I can hardly catch the tune but it is sweet, so sweet. Good-night!

* * *

No. 50 Rupert Square is now inhabited by persons of the caste of the quarter who spread neither mystery nor scandal. The old home at Philadelphia is reinvested under the joint supervision of Thomas and Eliza. Mr. Jarvis has left "The Mysterious" as a queer memory to the guilds of crime where he is sometimes discussed as one of the strange things of life.

He is exclusively the Henry T. Jarvis of position, scarcely less cold and formal than before, and a student of sociology. He believes in the force of environment as against the assumptions of blood. Hackles is rapidly disappearing in the development of Charley Jarvis, and countless unfolding instincts confirm his legitimacy in the Jarvis heirdom.

There is, in a small but well-located plot all its own in a cemetery near Chicago, a grave, and the marble at its head is inscribed: "Bess, more than a sister to Charles, and the adopted daughter of Henry T. Jarvis, Philadelphia."

A simple record of her name and birth had been intended, but her family vehemently protested. Mr. Jarvis had promptly and proudly substituted the present inscription.

Bill Thomes was caught and tried for complicity in the jewelry burglary and attendant death of Officer Chase. Such is the lottery of courts, however, that he was acquitted of that and immediately thereafter sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment for a South side burglary committed while he was in jail, as McMasters well knew.

The part taken by Minton, "the scout," was never learned, and when last heard from he was serving a small sentence in the Michigan state's prison for robbery. Hinckey Dink and Holy Joe are still careering their mystic way, having yet to meet the simple trap that will sooner or later trip them. 'Mandy and Rube live on as of yore.

A political upheaval has since transformed the police force. McMasters has retired to citizenship and Kinnane is walking a beat upon plain patrol duty at a sub-station. The water in the hydrant is still as cold and wet, the fires in

the "sweat-box" full as merry and warm, and the knuckles of the new chief of detectives are quite as hard as heretofore.

There is no abatement of traffic in liquor, and life and property are not any the more secure than in the day of these events, nor is poverty less common, nor is government more pure.

Such history is still a'writing in the Fair City.

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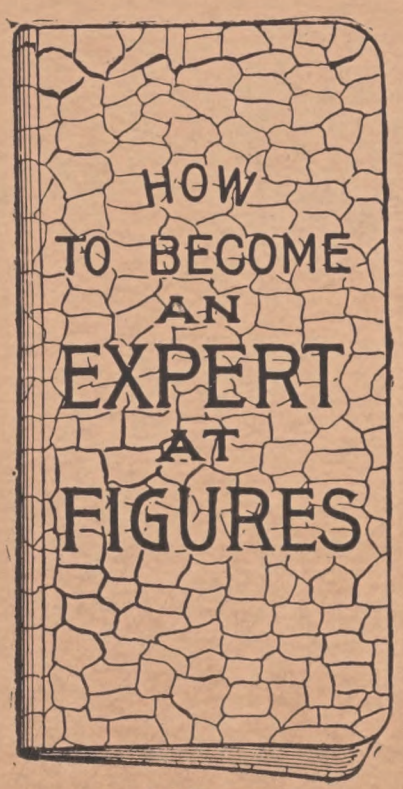

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